PUZZLED AND PLEASED;

TWO [illegible] SOLDIERS:

And other Tales.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

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THE MYSTERIOUS FREEBOOTER, UNKNOWN, VERY STRANGE BUT VERY TRUE, MEN AND MANNERS, ROMANCE OF THE HEBRIDES, LONDON, MYSTERY, ONE POUND NOTE, IMPENETRABLE SECRET, HUMAN BEINGS, ITALIAN MYSTERIES, ASTONISHMENT, FATAL VOW, MIDNIGHT BELL, &c. &c.

For modes of faith let angry zealots fight—
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right. POPE.

VOL. I.

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PUZZLED AND PLEASED.

A Tale.

THE moral contained in the following Tale, the Author leaves it to the good sense and judgment of his readers to discover. He believes that there is not a character in it, from the contemplation of which some individual may not turn to a view of his own heart, and apply to himself the address of the prophet to David—"Thou art the man."

It may not be improper to remark, that the character of Rebecca Searle is not fictitious. In the counties of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, the benevolent A——e C——r is well known, and most highly esteemed for her unwearied and meritorious exertions in the joint cause of religion and morality.



PUZZLED AND PLEASED.

CHAPTER I.

AT the distance of about one mile from the high-road between London and Portsmouth, and nearly twenty miles from the latter, lay a retired village, consisting of scarcely more than thirty cottages, in the centre of which an old-fashioned family-mansion, named Thunderbolt-Hall, was the only building which assumed the pride of elevating itself in a second story towards heaven. Antiquity was the leading feature of the structure, and even the grounds by which it was surrounded partook inti-

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mately of the same character; the garden was crowded with fantastic hedges of yew and box; and the lawn was darkened by frequent groups of elms on whose antique and scantily-verdured tops resided a multitudinous rookery, which seemed to claim an equal right to inheritance on the spot with the unfeathered bipeds who dwelt beneath them.

The inhabitants of the mansion, with the exception of domestics, consisted only of four persons; and though the rules of politeness might appear to call upon us to give the females the preference in their introduction to our readers, yet, according all due honour to the masculine, as being superior to the feminine *genus*, we shall begin with colonel Thunderbolt, the proprietor of the domain.

The colonel, who had entered into the army at a very early age, had in his youth been accounted a good-looking young fellow, and stood five feet nine inches high. The colonel was now sixty-nine,

and

and the imbecility of age having gained dominion over the precepts of drilling, he had apparently diminished some inches of his former stature; his thick brown hair was metamorphosed into a few locks of straggling grey, of which the deterior length was scarcely sufficient to allow the confinement of the black ribband which still aimed to form them into a military queue: the ruddy hue which had once animated his cheeks, was now mingled with a bronze, which had diffused itself in equal proportions over his whole countenance; and nothing now remained of the once good-looking Oliver, but a pair of quick and piercing eyes, of which age had very little dimmed the lustre, and which were the just reflectors of his hasty but intelligent mind. His clothes, which were invariably a suit of undress regimentals, and which, when tightly buttoned, in the military fashion of his day, had displayed no bad symmetry of form, now hung

about him in loose folds, which eloquently blabbed the wasting influence of time; but his cocked hat was still adjusted to his brow with as much exactness as if he had been preparing for a field-day before the commander-in-chief. The colonel was a good-hearted man; he wished to see every body with whom he was connected happy, and he was willing to exert himself to make them so; but it was his foible to desire to see them made happy his own way, and, if possible, to induce them to consider, that his plans, whatever they were, must be productive of their felicity; and against any measure which he had once considered it either prudent or desirable to adopt, it was difficult to contend; for the colonel had commanded soldiers, till he deemed it his legitimate right to command every one else; and he was besides gifted with a certain quickness of ideas, and an emphatic mode of delivering his sentiments, which rendered a fluent tongue

and an able head requisite to combat with his opinions and prejudices. The colonel had been twice married, but had, for several years past, been a widower: he was the father of two children, a son and a daughter—But of them anon.

The next in authority to himself in his family, was Miss Thomasine Hewardine, the maiden sister of his second wife; she was the superintendant of his household concerns, and in all but the name, the fostering parent of his daughter Clarentine. Miss Hewardine was in her fifty-fourth year; she was a woman, who, in addition to a good education, had enjoyed the benefits which arise from a constant intercourse with the best society; she was lively in her temper, good-humoured almost to a fault, and in her manners, pleasant in the extreme; unaffected in her dress, she always appeared the perfect gentlewoman, to whose habiliments no exact date of fashion could be affixed. By herself she was

constantly styled, "the Old Maid;" but seldom indeed was she thus distinguished by others, the suavity of her disposition rendering her acquaintance forgetful of the epithet to which she confessed herself entitled; in short, Miss Thomasine Hewardine was in every respect the diametrically-opposite character of those which fabulists have so repeatedly drawn under the head of old maids; and which, we are sorry to say, so many single ladies in real life have displayed themselves, by the indulgence of their acrimonious sneers, and pettish peculiarities.

Clarentine, her niece, now in her twenty-second year, was as lovely a young woman as the eye of idolizing man could desire to gaze upon. She had not a neck like the swan, nor eyes like diamonds, nor lips like rubies, nor cheeks like vermilion, nor teeth like pearl, nor a skin like ivory, nor a breath like otto of roses (such a being, we believe, was never seen, except on the

pages

pages of romance, and there she and her twin-sisters have so often made their appearance, that even the regular circulating-library-hunters are weary of their amplified resemblance)—no—Clarentine was merely a woman, possessing every exterior loveliness which nature designed to captivate the opposite sex, and every mental accomplishment which the union of natural good sense to a refined education could bestow, to bind the charm, without which outward perfection soon loses its value.

The fourth person of whom we promised to make particular mention, was a being of so extraordinary an appearance, that any individual, on beholding him for the first time, would probably, in open negation of the self-approved axiom, that whatever blemishes may descend from parents to their children, they do not inherit their wooden legs, have declared him a lineal descendant from the devil upon two sticks; as like that unfortu-

nate being, his supporters were both of wood; and though, like the celebrated widow Flinn, he had but one eye, which had once been a piercer; yet still, like the said widow Flinn, he had but that one, his other being shut out from the light of heaven by a large black patch, in like manner as, in the days of Billy Pitt, was the case with many a casement, which, when unblinded, had served to preserve unity, as well as to increase light to the front in which it was placed. The name of this remarkable man, who was a dependent of the colonel's, and, like his protector, had been a soldier, was Jedediah Trimbush. His father had been a small farmer, who was a tenant on the Thunderbolt estate; and in the early days of the colonel, with whom he was nearly of an age, had been his companion in all his boyish sports and exercises. Thus, although in dissimilar situations of life, a friendship had grown for each in the heart of the other, and, though still

nourished,

nourished, might perhaps have remained unavowed till the moment of their death, had no peculiar circumstance occurred to draw forth the confession.

When Oliver Thunderbolt had completed his twentieth year, the guardians who had been appointed him by his deceased father purchased for him an ensigncy in the army, and he was called upon to join his regiment, then in Ireland.

" If master Oliver is going to be a soldier, I will be a soldier too, in spite of fate," said Jedediah Trimbush.

His father remonstrated with him, but in vain; " Mr. Oliver Thunderbolt," he represented to his son, " is going into the army with all the advantages of a commission, and a fortune capable of promoting him, if the chance of war fails to do so."

" I care not," answered his son; " a private soldier is a station as well suited to my rank as a commission to his; no-

thing shall turn me from my purpose, I am determined, unless he disapproves the step which I intend taking; and I will go and ask his opinion directly."

He did so. Oliver heard him attentively, and with no small degree of satisfaction—"And is it indeed on my account that you would enlist?" he ejaculated, when Jedediah had ceased speaking.

"I have told you the truth, master Oliver," replied Trimbush.

"Then, my honest fellow," cried Oliver, "whilst I have a guinea, you shall never want a share of it!"

"And whilst I," exclaimed Trimbush, the tear of mingled joy and gratitude starting in his eye as he spoke—"whilst I have——", but suddenly checking himself—"I have nothing," he added, "that I can call my own, but these," clenching his fists, and placing himself in an attitude of defence; "you have seen

once

once or twice what they are able to do, master Oliver; they are at your service any hour in the four-and-twenty."

"Thank you, thank you!" replied Oliver; "but we are going where we shall have very different weapons of defence given us, and where the use of those to which you allude would be considered a disgrace to our profession."

"Well, well," answered Jedediah, "neither weapons, nor profession can change my heart; that shall always be yours—ay, and my soul too, if it could do you any good!"

A slow consent was wrung from Jedediah's father for his accompanying Oliver; and at the expiration of a few weeks they set out for Ireland. The very hour of their reaching the regiment, Trimbush accepted the shilling, which entitled him to wear the regimentals of his country; and Oliver, being at liberty to appoint himself a servant out of the ranks, Jedediah's hap-

piness

piness was rendered complete, by being elected to fill that office. Oliver was now engaged in forming acquaintance with his brother officers, and Trimbush in attending drill; and it was one of the proudest moments of his life, when he beheld the young ensign in his new regimentals, flourishing his sword on parade.

In the army, and living in the land of love and wine, it cannot be supposed that either Trimbush or his master led the lives of saints; but, in his sphere, Trimbush far exceeded the over-steppings of his master; in short, his fame for gallantry became so popular, that he was complimented with the nickname of the English Paddy, and was one of the few who could drink whiskey with an Irishman; but still his attention to his duty was so unremitting, and his conduct so exemplary, in the eyes of his superiors, that at the expiration of two years he was promoted to a halbert; and

shortly

shortly after the regiment received its route for America.

It is neither our intention, nor to the purpose of our tale, to follow the two soldiers through all their campaigns, but merely to relate the heads of such circumstances as progressively tended to strengthen colonel Thunderbolt's attachment to the now-disabled serjeant. At the ever-memorable siege of Quebec, the wind of a passing ball had stunned Oliver, now a captain, and cast him senseless on the field of battle. Conceived to be dead, as the nature of his wound had not been perceived by any one but his faithful serjeant, a few moments more would have consigned him to actual death, as a troop of cavalry were advancing at full speed towards the spot where he lay: dauntlessly Trimbush darted forward, snatched up Oliver in his arms, and bore him to a spot of safety, where a few hours restored him to animation, and a sense of the

high

high service which he had received from his humble friend. In gratitude for this noble act, captain Thunderbolt became indefatigable in his endeavours to procure the promotion of his favourite soldier; and he considered the weight of his obligation towards him in some degree lightened, when he had succeeded in gaining his elevation to the rank of serjeant-major.

In the course of a few years, Oliver's regiment was recalled to England, and then it was that the captain, for the first time, fell seriously in love. The object of his passion was a wealthy heiress, and he was so fortunate as to gain her own approbation, and that of her relatives, to their union; but, as an additional instance of the instability of human bliss, the hour that made Oliver a father deprived him of the existence of an adored wife.

There are few afflictions from which the human mind does not, with due exertion,

ertion, recover; and as he contemplated his boy, the violent grief which the removal of that child's parent from the stage of life had originally occasioned him, began gradually to subside. Time passed on, and, according to the daily observation, "that the recollection of the dead vanishes before the fascinations of the living," in the course of three years a change of quarters produced a revolution in the feelings of the captain, of which his heart became sensible at the first moment of his introduction to Miss Eliza Hewardine, the sister of that Miss Thomasine, whose name has already appeared in our pages, and she ultimately became his second wife. About this time captain Thunderbolt was presented with a majority, which had become vacant by the resignation of its late incumbent; and in the same year, Fate, as if perversely striving to display her inclination to bestow on him every happiness which advancement in life

life could produce, but an equal determination to withhold from him the comforts of domestic bliss, a second time deprived him of the partner of his affection, leaving him a pledge of her expiring love in the person of the infant Clarentine. His case was universally pitied; but what are words? The benevolent sister of his late wife became his active consoler, and a true mother to his child: her well-regulated attentions recalled him by degrees to himself; and her promise that she would never quit him, nor his infant, restored him to comparative satisfaction.

Peace reigning universally in Europe at the period of the melancholy event which we have just related, the major procured leave of absence from his regiment, and retired with his sister and child to Thunderbolt Hall. The neighbourhood boasted little society, at least such society as the major found pleasure in associating with; and nearly five

years

years passed away, during which the inhabitants of the Hall saw few strangers, with the exception of the masters engaged in the education of Clarentine; and received few visitors, except the clergyman of the parish, who resided at a considerable distance from the village, and seldom appeared there except on a Sunday, or any particular holiday. At the expiration of that time the Hall unexpectedly became the entertainer of two additional residents; the first of whom was serjeant Trimbush, who having obtained a three-months' furlough from his regiment, came to avail himself of an invitation which he had repeatedly received from the major, to pass any such vacation, of which he might procure the indulgence, beneath his roof: the second was the major's son, Frederick, who was now just entering into his thirteenth year, and somewhat more than four years the senior of his sister Clarentine: and concerning this youth,

youth, it is necessary that we should now say a few words, having hitherto taken no farther notice of him than simply to notify his existence.

The nearest existing relation of major Thunderbolt's first wife was her paternal uncle, an old admiral of the yellow, whose constant lamentation, together with that of his worthy spouse, it had been for a period of forty-three years, passed together in wedlock, that Heaven had not blessed their union with an heir; and at the second marriage of the major, they earnestly solicited to be indulged with the care of Frederick, upon whom, as the only male scion of their stock, they already doted. The major perceived that acquiescence must be for the benefit of his son, and accordingly gave his sanction to their wishes; the event of which adoption was, that the old admiral and his wife both dying within three months of each other, Frederick had just been declared heir to

eighty

eighty thousand pounds, which was to be held in trust for him till he had attained the age of twenty-one, and to which bequest two conditions only were annexed; the first, that he should enter into the navy; the next, that he should change his name to that of Trelawney, the one borne by his deceased protector; and in consequence of the death of these friends it was that Frederick now became an inmate of his father's house.

The future line of life marked out for his son by his late benefactor, was one which entirely met the approbation of his father. The major had, in the privacy of his heart, destined him for the army; but he considered the professions equal in the scale of honour, and was therefore very happy that the choice of the admiral had coalesced so nearly in opinion with his own. Frederick had already received every advantage which it had been possible for education to convey to his youthful mind; and the

science

science which was most intimately con-nected with his intended profession, had not by any means been neglected in the progress of his learning.

The major was well aware that in almost every profession, especially in that of the sea, the knowledge which is gained from experience, is infinitely more valid than that which is gathered from either theory or precept; and having convinced himself that a sufficient groundwork of general information had been laid in the mind of his son, to enable him, by the joint advantages of books and observation, to rear a structure of knowledge for his passport through life, he accordingly resolved, without delay, to enter him as midshipman on board a ship of war.

Frederick Thunderbolt was at this time a handsome, well-made youth, with a pair of eyes like his father's, expressive of a quick and active mind; like his father, too, he was hasty in temper;

but

but his anger was the gust of a moment; and as if nature had preconceived him for a British tar, one of his first pleasures was the act of reconciliation after a quarrel. His spirits were light and buoyant, although his mind was not without a due portion of solidity when called upon to be reflective; but with a heart unchecked by past cares, and amply defended against future ill, if Frederick could have been prevailed upon to adhere to any sect of philosophers, it must have been to the laughing ones.

Frederick was well pleased with the idea of his future life; and conceiving that the service of a sailor and a soldier must bear a close resemblance to each other, with the exception of their duty restraining them to opposite elements, he was unceasing in questioning both his father and Trimbush on all the events of their past lives—a subject on which the major was seldom weary of expatiating, especially when he could contrive

to make himself the hero of the tale, for the major was now growing old, and old age is always an egotist; and the serjeant, with humble deference to his garrulity be it spoken, could generally pursue the theme of war beyond the patience of his auditors.

"For my part," observed the serjeant one day in reply to an inquiry of Frederick's—"for my part, I would not exchange the profession I am in to be governor of Bengal; I am certain there is not such another happy life in the universe as a soldier's! If we have not much money in our pockets, we are never in want; and we spend what little we have to spare with a hearty goodwill. Besides, young gentleman, look at the respect that follows us wherever we go. You don't see your great doctors, or lawyers, or parsons, or any of your great folks, so much run after as the red-coats. No, no; they are the boys to get on the right side of all ranks and all ages, especially

cially to tickle up the hearts of the wo-men."

"I have heard my father say," returned Frederick, "that when you were in Ireland, you were such a wicked fellow amongst the girls, that you got the byename of English Paddy."

The serjeant tittered exultingly at the recollection of past times, then said—"No, no, no—not wicked, young gentleman; I am sure his honour the major did not mean to say wicked; only a little wild and trickish—nothing more.—Yes, I got the name of English Paddy, to be sure, and many a broken head I got into the bargain for my exploits from the Irish paddies, I can tell you; but I pitched into them again pretty tightly, I promise you—blow for blow—the fortune of love and war, young gentleman."

"And do you imagine a sailor's life passes equally pleasant?" asked Frederick.

"I can have no doubt of it, young gentleman," replied Trimbush; "a man who is engaged in the service of his country, whether by sea or land, can but have two motives to actuate his conduct; the first, to do his duty manfully in his calling; the next, as his profession renders his existence more uncertain than that of other men, to enjoy himself as well as he can whilst he is in the land of the living."

"But consider what confinement a sailor endures on board," said Frederick.

"I have heard say, young gentleman," answered the serjeant, "that most sailors declare, that if it was not for the contrast of that confinement with the hours they pass on shore, that they should not reap half the pleasure they do on land. Besides, it is only taking your amusements a little quicker at such times than you would do, if you had more leisure upon your hands. It is easy enough to get your pay spent in

any

any given time, when once you know how much you have at your command."

In the course of a few weeks, the major received intelligence that every preparation had been made for the reception of his son on board a seventy-four-gun ship, which was at that time lying in Yarmouth Roads; and upon the arrival of this information, a day was immediately fixed for his departure from the Hall. Frederick had taken an extraordinary liking to the serjeant, and in compliance with his particular request, the major had given his permission for Trimbush becoming his escort to the coast. The appointed morning of separation at length arrived; and having bade an affectionate farewell to those whom he left behind, Frederick, followed by his faithful attendant, entered the chaise which was to convey him the first stage of his journey; and the wheels being put into motion, Thunderbolt Hall in a few seconds vanished from his sight.

CHAPTER II.



"He is a fine boy, a devilish fine boy! and he will be a gentleman, or a father's hopes are deceived!" ejaculated the major, as he stood looking after the chaise, and wiping a tear from his eye as he spoke; "he has a noble heart—he will be an honour to the service; and I have no doubt of one day seeing him an admiral of the blue!"

Clarentine had retired to her chamber, to indulge, unseen, the tears which her sensitive heart could not repress at the departure of her brother. The major and Miss Thomasine continued strolling on the lawn, to the gate of which they had conducted Frederick.

"I think," continued the major, after a few moments passed in reflective silence,

lence, "that the wish which I formed about three years ago, appears to be realized; the glorious spirit which I witnessed in the son of another, and heartily prayed to see possessed by my own boy, appears to be implanted in the heart of Frederick. You probably recollect the circumstance to which I allude, sister; I dare say you have heard me tell the story of my going to see the Montem at Eton?"

Miss Hewardine had certainly frequently listened to the recital, but conscious how averse the major at all times was to be checked in recounting a favourite anecdote, however often it might have been listened to from his lips before, she replied—"I think I have heard you mention it; but I should like to hear you repeat it, for it is not very familiar to my memory."

"No!" returned the major; "then I will tell you how it was. Happening to be in London about three years ago, and

seeing an account in the newspapers that the Eton Montem was to take place the next day—you know what it is, don't you, sister Thom? The head boy on the foundation has the liberty, every third year, of taxing every passenger along the road for an optional gratuity, which forms a little sum to send him to college—I see you know what I mean. Well then, to proceed with my story. So, as I found the king was expected to be there, and as it was a long while since I had seen his majesty (Heaven bless him!), I determined to go myself.

"The day came, and off I set on horseback; it was a pretty sight—a very pretty sight, indeed! The road was thronged with carriages full of spectators, who came to contribute their mite to the laudable purpose; and the spirits of the crowd were not a little exhilarated by the presence of majesty. The smiles of a good king are sure to diffuse happiness among his people; they feel it a satisfaction to be

be the subjects of a sovereign whose example is meritorious as a man;—and when he appears among them, the distance at which they stand from each other is lost in the pleasure of obedience. It was, as I said before, an uncommonly pretty sight. The boys all looked so happy—all so proud of collecting gifts to swell the purse of the captain; and he and his attendant so smart and bedizened, and the music playing—damme, if the scene did not animate me almost as much as a grand review!

"Well, but to the circumstance I was going to speak of. In the course of the afternoon, an unruly horse ran away with a gig, threw down a poor woman, and broke her leg. I was in sight of the accident at the time it occurred; so was the captain of the day. He immediately came up to the spot, ordered every care to be taken of the poor creature at his expence, saying—'that he could enjoy no farther pleasure himself till he

saw her properly attended to,' and appropriated five guineas from the purse in which the collections of the day were contained to her use."

"What a generous, good-hearted youth!" exclaimed Miss Thomasine.

"Was not he?—was not he?" ejaculated the major. "Well, sister Thom, I believe you pretty well know that I never could see a worthy object in distress without feeling as if I were in the place of the sufferer, nor ever witness an act of feeling or humanity, without being as much affected by it as if the benefit had been conferred on myself. I directly took a twenty-pound bank-note out of my pocketbook, rode up to the captain, and putting it into his hand, said—'You are a noble, a glorious youth! accept this as a mark of an old soldier's esteem.' The youth was, no doubt, surprised at my address; and whilst he was collecting himself to reply, I rode off; for you know there is

nothing

nothing I hate so much as being made the object of another's thanks."

Miss Thomasine fixed her eyes upon him with a significant smile, and nod of her head, which eloquently implied— "I know you, and your heart too."

"I was nearly half-way back to London," continued the major, "when I repented that I had not made better acquaintance with the youth, and, above all, that I had not asked his name; but evening was coming on, and I considered it too late that night to turn back for the gratification of a point of curiosity, and so I rode home to my lodgings. But, on the following afternoon, happening to be in a coffee-room, where two other gentlemen, whom I found had also been at Eton on the preceding day, were discussing the circumstance, I inquired of them if they knew the family, or the name of the youth, whose manly conduct had so much interested all our feelings? Their reply

was, that they knew no more of him than that they had heard one of his fellow-students address him by the name of George Louvaine; and from that day to this I have neither seen nor heard any more of him; but whoever he might be, and whether now dead or alive, I maintain that George Louvaine was a noble-spirited lad."

At this moment the major's eye falling upon Miss Hewardine, he perceived her countenance averted from him, and her hand employed in brushing a tear from her cheek— "Sister!" he exclaimed, "what is the matter? Have I said or done any thing to vex you? Upon my soul, I am innocent of any intention of the kind; I would sooner receive a small-shot wound than offend you—you know I would. Tell me what it is that affects you?"

"Only a transitory recollection," replied Miss Hewardine; "it will subside in a moment; heed it not."

"But

"But have I been to blame in producing it?" asked the major.

"No, no—oh, no!" answered Miss Thomasine.

"But your emotion must have arisen from something which I said or did," rejoined the major.

"Surely," answered Miss Hewardine, drawing her handkerchief across her eyes as she spoke, and endeavouring to reassume her usual placidity of tone and countenance—"surely you must have heard my sister mention the name of George Louvaine?"

"Never, never," answered the major—"I am positive I never did."

"Excellent Eliza!" ejaculated Miss Hewardine, "it is an additional proof of the purity and honour of her heart, that she considered my secrets sacred, even from the man towards whom she had no concealments on her own account!"

"She was an excellent—a very excel-

-lent woman, Heaven rest her soul!" pronounced the major; then, after a momentary pause, he added—"but who is this George Louvaine to whom you refer?"

"I have often been tempted to inquire of you, whether you were acquainted with any one of the name," replied Miss Thomasine, "as I had distantly heard that the latter years of his life had been passed in the army?"

"No," answered the major; "I never heard the name till that day of which I have just been giving you an account. But who was he?"

"The only man I ever knew," returned Miss Hewardine, "with whom I could have experienced satisfaction in uniting my destiny; but a point of duty militated against our happiness, and I yielded my inclinations at the shrine of parental authority. I am now full forty years old, long past the blushing age of love; and I feel no hesitation in avow-

ing

ing either my affection or my constancy; there never was, nor ever will exist, any man whom I can regard with the same degree of partiality that I felt for him. It can be no reflection to have experienced those affections of which nature has made the heart of every created being susceptible; the only impropriety lies in their indulgence, in cases where their gratification might entail repentance on ourselves, or interrupt the felicity of those with whom we are connected. If we have the resolution to impose the restraint of reason on our conduct, an affection nourished under so impregnable a breastplate can never engender remorse; and under such a defence, I regard that constancy which endures to the termination of existence, creditable both to the head and heart."

"If your neglect of others be a proof of your constancy to him," answered the major, "I can bear testimony to that, for I have known you refuse some very good

good offers since we have been acquainted."

"I have indeed, brother," returned Miss Thomasine, "and simply for this reason, that I felt myself incapable of a second attachment, and therefore forbore to unite myself with any man whose happiness there was a possibility of my at some time upbraiding myself with being defective in promoting."

"Your story, sister Thom," rejoined the major, "has no doubt been a romantic one; and as you hinted that you did not wish to withhold it from me, I should be much gratified if you would favour me with the recital."

"There is very little romance contained in my story, I assure you," replied Miss Thomasine, "and very few words will serve to detail all my past adventures connected with the heart. My father was descended from an ancient and honourable family in the north of England, and had from his birth im-

bibed all that pride and consequence which is usually inherent in those who can trace their ancestry through a lengthened pedigree. At the period of which I am about to speak, my sister and myself, who were his only children, resided with him in the city of York. One of my father's most intimate friends was a gentleman of the name of Louvaine, who ranked high in the law; and George Louvaine was his only son. From a very early age, an intimacy had been contracted between George and myself, which, as we advanced in years, had matured into love; and when I had attained my eighteenth year, Mr. Louvaine addressed to my father a suit from his son, requesting my hand in marriage. My father hesitated for a time how to reply; although his own name was ungraced by a preceding title, still, in the ambition of his heart, he desired to see his daughters paired with men who possessed those honorary advantages: at length, however,

however, the high reputation in which the family of Louvaine stood, both for wealth and reputation, overruled his ambitious views, and he consented that when I had arrived at my twenty-first year, George should lead me to the altar. To that period. three years were still wanting, and, till within four months of its completion, time moved on unmarked by events, except that Mr. Louvaine, the father of George, was sinking into a languid state of health; and, in the opinion of his friends, his spirits appeared not less severely affected than his constitution. One morning about this time, I was not so much surprised from the symptoms which had lately appeared in him, as I was shocked to learn that he had died suddenly in the course of the preceding night.

"The distress in which this event had plunged his family, was a sufficient apology for my seeing little of George whilst his parent lay unburied. On the morning

ing of the day appointed for the interment, my father came into my dressing-room, threw himself into a chair, and fixed his eyes upon me, with an agitation of countenance for which I could not account. It was very near the hour at which I had been informed that the funeral was to take place, and observing that he still wore his plain clothes, I could not forbear reminding him of the hour of the morning, and telling him my reason for doing so.—'Mr. Louvaine's funeral!' he echoed after me with contempt—'do you suppose that I would condescend to go to the funeral of a beggar?'—'Beggar!' I with difficulty stammered out.—'Yes,' he replied, with asperity of voice—'the man of boasted wealth and integrity has died insolvent, and you have seen his son for the last time."

In spite of her natural fortitude, the voice of Miss Thomasine faltered, and her feelings for a while stifled her utterance.

ance. The major walked to a little distance, in order to allow her time to recover her composure unobserved; and when he returned to her, perceiving her eyes suffused with tears, he said—"Make the rest of your story as short as possible; I wish, from my soul, I had never asked you for it; damme, if my blood does not boil to hear of parents making wretches of their children to gratify their own pride and avarice!—Well, I suppose he kept his word?"

"He did," answered Miss Hewardine; "with a voice and countenance which I shall never forget, he told me that I must either implicitly obey his commands, or submit to be turned pennyless from his door, and carry his curse with me to the grave. As soon as I could sufficiently command my spirits to reply, I said that I had two motives for obeying his mandate—the first, that I should deem myself eminently culpable, were I to cast myself a burden

upon

upon one whose circumstances he had just informed me were inadequate to the charge—the next, that I should regard myself more than criminal, were I, by any act of mine, to load the head of my parent with the sin of having cursed the offspring of his own blood."

"Excellent! noble!" exclaimed the major. "And did not this touch his heart?"

"Oh, no, no!" replied Miss Thomasine—"he did not regard the sacrifice which I had made in its true light—he appeared only to consider that I had done my duty towards him and myself, by having obeyed his commands; and having obtained his permission to write a farewell letter to George, I besought him, if possible, to forget that such a being as myself had ever existed, and implored him to transfer his affections to some other woman, whose destiny might permit her to reward him with

her

her hand for the good opinion which he entertained of her. To this I added the motives which I had already assigned to my father for yielding obedience to his will; and leaving it to his own good sense to determine whether I had not acted the part which his heart must dispassionately applaud the woman whom he had once loved and respected for having pursued, I again conjured him to obliterate me from his memory, and concluded by a fervent prayer for his happiness and prosperity. The letter was sent, and on the following day I was informed that George had left York."

"And since that time——" said the major.

Miss Thomasine took up the sentence —"I have only heard," she said, "through a vague and uncertain channel, that he entered into the army, and went to the East Indies; but I know not how to credit the report, for he had been edu-

cated

cated for a physician, although, at the time of our separation, he had not taken his diploma."

"Perhaps the unexpected change which took place in his father's circumstances altered his plans," remarked major Thunderbolt.

"It might be so," answered Miss Hewardine; "but I afterwards learned, that although the late Mr. Louvaine had reduced his fortune by some unsuccessful speculations into which he had unguardedly entered, that a slender income had been preserved from the wreck for George, sufficient at least to defend him against the extremities of want."

"But do you suppose the youth who engaged my attention at the Montem to be any relation of your old friend's?" asked the major.

"It is impossible for me to divine," rejoined Miss Thomasine; "I know that the Louvaines of whom George was a descendant, had some distant relatives, who

who were said to move in a more elevated sphere of life than themselves; but where they resided, or what their name, I never heard: it is, however, a strange coincidence of circumstances—is it not?"

"It is—it is," said the major. "The youth of whom I have been speaking had a remarkably-handsome person, florid complexion, aquiline nose, intelligent eyes, and one of the finest heads of auburn hair I ever saw in my life."

"The very opposite of George," rejoined Miss Hewardine: "his countenance was remarkably dark, his eyes pensive, and his hair of the deepest jet."

"There is no family-resemblance between them then at least," observed the major, "whether they are relations or not; and that is probably more than you or I shall ever know, sister. And now let us drop this unpleasant subject, and never resume it again, unless——"

"Unless

"Unless what, brother?" asked Miss Hewardine.

"Unless I should chance;" returned the major—"as Heaven only knows where fate may send me yet before I die—to fall in with the real, identical——" He paused, and looked smilingly in the face of Miss Thomasine; she smiled also, and sighed.

"Nay, nay—I am sure you deserve him," cried the major, "and have a right to consider him your own, as much as if the knot had been tied between you; and what is more, if he and I should ever come within gunshot of one another, I shall have a very poor opinion of him, if I don't find him prepared to pay every homage to your extraordinary merit; for such I do and will say has marked your conduct. Where," he added, after a momentary pause, "could I have found such a protectress for my child—such an example to place before her growing years, as an individual like yourself,

yourself, who has combated the strongest temptations, and sacrificed the innocent inclinations of her heart at the shrine of duty?"

"Recollect also, brother," replied Miss Thomasine, "that having experienced the severity of disappointment, my heart is open to pity those unfortunates whom I may perceive at the brink of devoting themselves to a similar self-immolation."

Clarentine was at this moment seen advancing towards them, and the conversation was changed to another subject.

CHAPTER III.



SIX years now passed away, unmarked by any event of importance to our history, during which Frederick had paid occasional visits to the Hall, and his father had twice passed a week with him on the coast, when his ship had chanced to be in harbour, and from whence he had returned home, not a little proud and delighted at the respect with which he saw his son regarded by his shipmates, from the commander down to the cabin-boy. With the exception of these two visits to his son, the major himself had equally divided his time between his regiment and his family; but the period was now approaching which was once more to call him to the theatre of war; hostilities had for some time past

been waging on the Continent, and the major's regiment, which had not been called into actual service since it had quitted America, at length received its route to proceed to the Netherlands; it was a call of honour, which, old as he now was, the major felt himself bound to obey; and preparations having been made for his departure, he once more quitted England, and the beloved objects whom it contained, to brave the perils of the field of battle.

After nearly four years' hard service, the raising of a long-contested siege awarded the palm of victory to the English flag; and this was the last day on which either the major or his faithful adherent Jedediah were ever fated to wield the sword: the event of the struggle of that day was, that poor Trimbush was, in the course of a few minutes, deprived of one of his eyes, and wounded in both his legs, in which situation he was observed, and rescued

from

from death by his master, in the same manner that he had once snatched him from the jaws of destruction; and the major, after having escaped all the perils of the day, and being promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel by the death of his superior officer, had the misfortune to be wounded in the shoulder by a spent ball, at the very close of the engagement.

The major's hurt was immediately dressed, and pronounced to be productive of no evil consequences; but, on inspecting the wounds of poor Trimbush, it was found necessary for the preservation of his life that his legs should both be amputated; the operation was accordingly determined upon, and they were taken off immediately above the knee.

When Trimbush became capable of turning his thoughts from his bodily sufferings to outward objects, he perceived the colonel, with his wounded

arm suspended in a sling, leaning over the couch upon which he was extended; he eagerly inquired the nature of the colonel's hurt, and having received a reply which communicated no inconsiderable degree of satisfaction to his mind, he put out his hand, and having received that of the colonel in his, pressing it with all the strength of which his languid state was capable, he said—"Heaven bless you! Heaven bless you! —whether I live or die, we part now—Chelsea will be my quarters now."

"Chelsea!" cried the colonel; "what do you mean by that? Chelsea is an excellent asylum, and a blessing to those who have no other home; but do you think I would suffer you to go there, when I have a home of my own to take you to?"

"Oh, your honour!" returned Trimbush, "an old worn-out cripple like me——"

The colonel interrupted him—"In

the

the very subject to claim the respect and the services of every individual, especially of an old soldier like myself—and more especially of myself, whom you rescued from death the first time my life was ever in danger."

"Oh, your honour!" replied Trimbush, "your courage this day saved my life."

"And," rejoined the colonel, again interrupting him, "as I wish to preserve it beyond this day, I charge you not to speak; you are too weak, after the loss of blood you have sustained, even for the exertion of uttering a syllable."

"But a full heart like mine——" Trimbush was again beginning.

A third time the colonel interrupted him.—"In quality of your officer," he said, "I command you to be silent."

In consequence of the conquest of which we have just spoken, a truce had been proclaimed; and the colonel avail-

ing himself of the double plea of his wound and his declining age, declared his intention of retiring upon half-pay—poor Jedediah had already received an effective discharge from all future service: accordingly the colonel, being resolved not to quit his humble friend on their journey home, by a slow and easy progress they at length reached Thunderbolt Hall. One of the most comfortable chambers in the mansion was immediately prepared for the invalid; the domestics were commanded to attend to his wants, at the peril of incurring their master's heaviest displeasure; and it required but the gentlest hint from the colonel for Miss Hewardine and his daughter to extend every service of which they were capable to a being whom he esteemed. The serjeant's father had long been numbered with the dead; and the remnant of his family scattered; thus, but for the interest taken in his fate by the colonel, he

would have been as great a stranger in his native village as if he had been transported to the mouth of the Ganges. The serjeant was now become a necessary appendage to the existence of his friend; the colonel, we have already mentioned, when residing in the retirement of Thunderbolt Hall, mixed very little in what the world calls company; and as his years increased, his distaste for mixed society strengthened, and his chief enjoyment was his pipe and bottle, taken in social chat over his study fire with Trimbush, who assisted his memory in retracing all the military adventures in which they had been engaged.

About a year after their return from the Continent, Frederick, now promoted to a lieutenancy, came to pay a visit to the Hall. Frederick, at this period in his twenty-third year, fulfilled, in the manliness and vigour of his mind and disposition, all the happy prognostics which had been drawn of him by his

fond father; and in the maturity of a face and form which had in youth promised more than ordinary masculine beauty, he exceeded even the expectations which his friends had formed of his future perfections. With such an exterior, displayed to the greatest advantage in the uniform of the service, it cannot be supposed that Frederick Trelawney was more of a saint than either the colonel or Trimbush had evinced themselves at his age; but, in justice to his head and heart, be it averred, that although one of the wildest votaries of pleasure, especially when the goddess intoxicated his senses with the smile of fascinating woman, he was an equal abhorrer of vice, and in his most impassioned moments had never sought either to raise the first blush on the cheek of innocence, or ever had cause to reproach himself with having communicated a pang to the heart of an insulted husband or father.

Frederick had only once seen Trimbush, and that for a very short period of time, since he had escorted him to the coast previously to his first embarkation; and recollecting the conversation which had passed between himself and the serjeant, when a youth, relative to their respective professions, he was eager to inform his old acquaintance what his own opinion on the subject was, after the years of experience which he had now enjoyed; and taking an early opportunity, after his arrival at the Hall, of paying the veteran a visit in his own apartment, he thus addressed him:—"Well, serjeant, you were perfectly right in all you told me about the happy lives passed by soldiers and sailors—at least, whatever the army may be, I will swear the navy is a devilish fine life."

"Devilish enough, I doubt not," replied Trimbush, "to those who are blind to the straight path."

These words were uttered with a so-

lemnity of voice which at the instant escaped Frederick, and he rejoined—"Of which blind animals we all know you were one—we can't suppose you got the name of English Paddy for nothing. I dare say you were a preciously-wicked, dashing dog, in your day."

"And what am I now?" ejaculated the serjeant—"what but a proof that vanity is the shadow of death? Behold English Paddy now! The Lord in his omniscience beheld my sins, and sent me the chastisements you now see me labouring under, to preserve my soul."

"Why you are quite grave," replied Frederick; "I never heard you so serious before."

"You have hitherto known me only in my blindness," answered Jedediah—"till I lost one of my eyes, I could never see; the truth is now revealed unto me, and by the grace of Heaven I hope soon to be born again, and thus to be made a new man."

Frederick

Frederick laughed, and said—"I don't know what you mean—I don't understand what point you are steering for."

"I will explain myself to you as well as I am able," replied Jedediah. "I was once one of the most abandoned and wicked young fellows in the universe——"

Frederick interrupted him.—"Not wicked, you know you once told me—not wicked, only wild and trickish amongst the girls."

"I knew not then," returned the serjeant, "the extent of the heinousness which I committed; but I have lately been redeemed from error, even to repentance. Since I have been a resident in the Hall, by the bounty of your honoured father (Heaven bless him!) I have passed a good deal of my time here in my quarters alone, and solitude has led me to reflection. These," he added, laying his hand as he spoke upon some

 numbers

numbers of the Evangelical Magazine—"these have worked my reformation."

"Where did you get them?" asked Frederick; "for I am sure they do not form a part of my father's library."

"I had them," answered the serjeant, "of one mean in the consideration of the unthinking and unbelieving part of society, but chosen of Heaven. If it would not occupy too great a portion of your time, your honour," he continued, after a short pause, "I should feel a satisfaction in relating to you how my conversion was brought about."

The seriousness of Jedediah's countenance and voice, whilst he advanced this request, made an impression on the mind of Frederick, and taking a seat by his side, he begged that he would give him the relation.

"About half a year ago," replied the serjeant, "when I first began to hobble about upon my two wooden pins, one

of

of my first walks to any distance from the Hall, was towards the cottage where my poor father lived when I first went into the army. I perceived that many alterations had taken place in the little habitation, but still it retained enough of its former appearance to interest my feelings, and I sat myself down at the foot of a tree which grew near the little gate at the entrance; and as I indulged in the recollection of many a day long gone by, I insensibly began singing part of an appropriate old Scotch ballad, called—" Auld Lang Syne."

Frederick gave an assenting nod of his head, and Jedediah proceeded thus with his narrative:—" I was still singing and lost in thought, when I heard myself addressed by the voice of a person whom I did not observe, till, led by the sounds which she had uttered to raise my eyes towards her, I perceived, standing opposite to me, a matronly woman, decently clad, of an appearance remarkably

remarkably clean and neat, and whose countenance was enlightened by a smile of the most placid benignity. When my eyes encountered hers, she repeated the sentence which she had before spoken —'Would it not,' she said, 'better befit an unfortunate cripple like thyself, to chant a hymn to the praises of thy Creator or Redeemer, than to waste thy time in singing the verses of a worldly poet?'—I looked at her with no small degree of surprise, which perceiving, she said—'Although I am myself an unworthy object, I speak the words of the law and the prophets, and am not ashamed.'

" I arose, explained to her on what account I had taken my seat under the tree, and in what manner the association of my ideas had betrayed me into the song which she had heard me singing. —'Did your father reside in that little dwelling?' she said. I replied in the affirmative; and I suppose the venera-

tion

tion with which my heart was at that moment filled for his memory was visible on my countenance, for she immediately rejoined—'I believe you to be a good man, for I never yet saw one of an unfeeling heart appear to reflect with pleasure on the authors of his being, after the common enemy of man had removed them from their terrestrial existence. This dwelling is now mine; walk in with me, and indulge yourself with the sight of its interior.'

"I accepted her invitation: she led the way; and when, at her request, I had taken a seat, she placed before me a plate of fruit and a cup of mead; this done, she retired for a few minutes, to give me an opportunity, as it appeared, of gazing around upon the well-known apartment, where every nook and every rafter appeared to supply the place of an old friend; and presently returning, she placed herself opposite to me, and said—'I make no excuse for the address with

with which I first introduced myself to you—I spoke the dictates of my heart, under the authority of my heavenly Monitor; and I would sooner incur your displeasure for my apparent freedom, than his anger for my positive neglect.' She paused a moment, then continued speaking thus:—' Your profession has been one which I doubt has permitted you little time for thoughts of a religious nature; it requires a method, which few have been so blessed as to attain, to understand that God may be worshipped at all hours, at all seasons, under all circumstances, and in all occupations. But have not the bodily sufferings under which you have laboured, and through which you are still reserved for repentance, convinced you of the omnipotence and the forbearance of the great Jehovah?'

" My system, your honour, had altogether been a good deal reduced since the loss of my limbs—my spirits too were

were at that moment a good deal depressed, by dwelling on the memory of my poor old father, and, somehow or other, the old woman's appeal to my feelings went so forcibly to my heart, that some of the pranks of my younger days stared me in the face whilst she was speaking; and when she paused—'Heaven help us!' I exclaimed, 'I believe the best of us want mending.'—'Then why do you not haste whilst there is yet oil in your lamp,' returned my new friend, 'to seek that amendment, and to enjoy the beatitude of an approving conscience? Have you not read—"Knock, and it shall be opened unto you?"—thus saith the Lord, and in his promises there is no guile.'—'The good honest man who once inhabited this cottage,' I answered, 'obliged me to make the Bible my principal study when a boy.'—'Then,' rejoined the old woman, 'however a depraved profession may have stifled the growth of religion in

in your heart, I will not believe but that its seeds are still existing there; I never yet knew any man who had been taught the worship of his Creator in the days of his youth, that ever wholly forgot the lessons which he had received in the first years of his innocence.'

"Almost at a loss what to say to her, so different was her mode of addressing me to any thing which I had been accustomed to hear, I answered her in a few words, amounting to something like an expression of thankfulness for the interest which she expressed herself to take in the welfare of one to whom she was a stranger.—'That is a misnomer,' she rejoined—'there should be no strangers to each other amongst Christian believers; we are all children of one Father, and should act the part of loving brethren towards one another—equally free in the admonition of the heart, as it becomes us to be in the liberality of the hand: of the latter I well know you do

not

not stand in need—in the former it would gratify me to become your instructress.'—'It is true, as you imagine,' I answered, 'that the profession in which I have till very lately been engaged gave me little leisure for reflecting on subjects of a serious nature.'—'And since necessity has obliged you to relinquish your occupation,' she asked, 'have you not found your hours, and even days, hang heavily on your hands, and wished for some employment to diminish them of their length?'—'I have indeed very often,' was my reply.—'Which is an incontrovertible proof,' she returned, 'that you have too little acquaintance with Religion. The man who has once discovered the charms of which she is possessed, has a fund of never-ceasing employment in seeking to render himself every day better acquainted with the blessings which she can bestow, and resigns himself to sleep with a security

which

which he never tasted in his ignorance of her consoling powers. Give me a friendly call, now and then, and I will teach you how to seek and to find the true revelation; and I will lend you a few books for your perusal, which will help and encourage your search after the truth; by persevering, you will inherit grace.'

"Well, your honour, I accepted the loan of the books, and I did occasionally call and converse with the old gentlewoman; and I must own (for it would be a heinous sin in me to deny the blessings which I have reaped from following her counsel) that I have, since my acquaintance with her commenced, found all my leisure time most satisfactorily filled up—that I have learned to atone for my past transgressions, and to guard against the commission of future crimes —and above all, that I have discovered that the most exalted feeling which a

human

human being can experience, is to live in the hope of having made his eternal peace with his Creator."

"And who is this good female to whom you appear to consider yourself so highly indebted?" asked Frederick.

"Her name," answered the serjeant, "is Rebecca Searle; she is the widow of a worthy preacher of the gospel, now many years called to his reward in heaven, who used monthly to visit and exhort various evangelical communities in this neighbourhood; and since his decease, she has not unfrequently exhorted in his stead, as the hearers of her late husband value her words more than those of any other admonisher. But it is not alone in the dispensation of the word," added Trimbush, "that she excels—slenderly as she is herself furnished with the needful things of this earth, she has a sympathizing heart and an open hand for every son and daughter of adversity."

The

The dinner-bell now ringing, called upon Frederick to descend, and thus, for the present, put a period to his conversation with the serjeant.

When the cloth was removed, and conversation succeeded to the pleasures of the table—"I have been quite surprised this morning," said Frederick, "at my old friend Trimbush acquainting me that he is turned Methodist."

"Not more so than I was, I am sure," returned the colonel, "when he told me of the call that he had received, as he styles his conversion; and yet I don't know why I was surprised at it either, for he has been the very devil of a fellow in his day—a prime son of mischief, if ever there was one upon earth; and I have always heard it remarked, that they are the most profligate of both sexes who, when they begin to dread the approach of death, enlist under the banners of that canting, hypocritical religion."

"Nay, nay, brother," remarked Miss Thomasine; "although there may no doubt have been members of the Methodist persuasion whose characters have been reprehensible for dissimulation, in what sect shall we not find individuals of a similar cast? I have myself known several very excellent persons who adhered to their tenets."

"Ah!" cried the colonel, smiling, "it would not be you if your good-nature did not endeavour to find an excuse for the failings of every created being: I wish you may always find the world as civil to you in return. You shake your head; I know what you mean by that —'Do as you would be done by'—the golden rule, as you call it; well, I don't dispute its value, and for that reason I don't endeavour to blow up the old serjeant's new opinions—I only warn him to forbear all attempts at converting me, as he calls it; and while he does that, we shall jog on just as usual in other respects.

respects. When he first became one of old mother Searle's proselytes, he used to throw me into tremendous passions, by dinning his cant and jargon in my ears; but he sees me resolute now, and so he says no more on the subject; and I, in return, advance no arguments to weaken his zeal, in a cause which he seems to derive happiness from supporting. I regard liberty of opinion to be every man's right, or he could not be a free agent; and moreover, I consider that a man who has fought the battles of his country for fifty years, so he has but the grace to remember and acknowledge his Creator, has a just right to serve him in any way that best satisfies his own feelings."

"That is spoken like yourself, my dear colonel, and I honour you for the liberality of your sentiments," said Miss Hewardine, giving him an applauding tap on the shoulder as she passed behind his chair, in quitting the dining-room

with her niece, to prepare for their afternoon's walk.

"Was the serjeant ever accustomed to attend church when he happened accidentally to be a resident in this village?" inquired Frederick; "because I think, from what I recollect of the persuasive manner and venerable appearance of your old rector, Mr. Murray, he must have been as likely to produce a favourable impression on his heart, in the cause of religion, as Rebecca Searle?"

"Mr. Murray, our old rector," returned the colonel, "has been long dead."

"And who holds the living now?" was the subsequent question on the part of Frederick.

"A distant relation of the old man," answered the colonel—"the reverend Peregrine Elphinstone is his name. He is a young man—about thirty years of age, I imagine; appears very well educated, and possesses engaging manners. His eloquence in the pulpit is gentle,

 but

but pleasing; he is liked in his profession, and a prodigious favourite with the ladies all the country round."

"And what does Trimbush think of his unimpassioned doctrine, opposed to Rebecca Searle's?" asked Frederick.

"I know nothing of the matter," replied colonel Thunderbolt; "it is a subject upon which, by joint consent, the serjeant and I never enter. But there he is, I see, passing the window; so, if you have an inclination to gratify your curiosity by proposing a few questions to him, call him in to take a glass with us."

Frederick starting from his seat, ran to the window, and rapped with his knuckles upon the sash; the serjeant obeyed the summons, and in a few minutes was seated in the apartment. After a few glasses had been drunk to the never-forgotten toasts of, "the king," "the army," and "the navy," to which Frederick added a bumper to the health

of

of the ladies—"Well, serjeant," exclaimed the lieutenant, "as you are become one of the initiated, as I may say, into the doctrines of the church, I want to hear your opinion of the new minister, Mr. Elphinstone."

"As a man, or as a preacher, your honour?" asked Jedediah.

"How he pleases you in the pulpit, I mean," replied Trelawney.

"I have heard him very seldom," answered Trimbush, "and very likely never may again—his discourses are not to my taste."

"I guessed so," rejoined Frederick—"they are no doubt in direct opposition to the tenets which you profess."

"I beg your honour's pardon," returned the serjeant—"I am not so bigoted to any sect, but that I candidly allow profitable advice may proceed from the voice of a good member of any persuasion. It is not therefore on the account which you suspect that I acknowledge

myself to be dissatisfied with his discourses."

"What then is it that you find reprehensible in them?" asked the young lieutenant.

"Why, your honour," answered Trimbush, "it appears to me that his discourses, if they *are* his own, which he delivers from the pulpit, are rather calculated to display his oratory and learning, than to instruct his hearers. It strikes me, your honour, that a sermon, publicly delivered, should be adapted to the comprehension of the meanest individual, whilst it may still be so formed as to convey useful hints, even to those who possess an absolute knowledge of the subject of religion; and those discourses which I have heard from Mr. Elphinstone have frequently appeared to me more intricate than the parables which he professed himself to be engaged in explaining."

"There is some truth in that remark," ejaculated

ejaculated the colonel; "I speak of every man as I think."

"Then, your honour," continued the serjeant, addressing Frederick, "I am of opinion that the exemplary man should be united to the enlightened minister, in order to render his flock attentive to his exhortations, and to stimulate them to receive his word as their card of life."

"Then Mr. Elphinstone is not exactly a man of this description, I suppose?" said Frederick.

"By no means," replied the serjeant —"he is a man of fashion, and I cannot think that fashion and faith have any thing to do with each other: besides, he breaks in his own person those commandments to which he preaches obedience; he utters the most profane oaths on the public roads against his horses and his dogs, although he knows that it is written in the law of life—'Swear not at all.' All the single women he addresses as if he intended to propose

 himself

himself to them for a husband; and to the married ones he uses as much freedom, both in his speech and his countenance, as if he conceived them to be unwedded."

"You were not always so precise in that respect, serjeant," rejoined Frederick; "and surely, even with the most rigid, there can be no harm in looking with admiration at the most virtuous woman that ever was born."

"You are in error, your honour," rejoined the serjeant; "is it not said in the gospel, that he who looketh on any woman with an intemperate eye, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart?"

"It is a crime of which I can, with a safe conscience, say I never was guilty," ejaculated the colonel; "I married early in life, and I recommend every young man to do the same; the respect which he bears his own wife, teaches him to respect those of his neighbours."

"You

"You spoke of Mr. Elphinstone's horses and dogs," said Frederick—"I suppose, by that, he is a sportsman?"

"More of that, I believe, your honour, than any thing else," answered Jedediah.

"Well, I imagine you don't reckon it a sin for a clergyman to have his recreations as well as any other man?" rejoined the lieutenant.

"I reckon it a sin for any man," returned the serjeant, "especially a preacher of the word, to make his recreations the business of his life, your honour. Mr. Elphinstone shoots or hunts all day, and all the evening he dances or plays at cards with the ladies. He never visits the sick of his congregation—never prays an hour with the devout—never passes an evening in instructing the ignorant, or exhorting the profligate to repentance—never, never."

"All which duties, I suppose," re-

 joined

joined Frederick, smiling, "Rebecca Searle punctually performs?"

"She does, your honour," replied the serjeant, "devoutly—with all her heart and soul: and now I leave it to any thinking and conscientious mind, to determine whether she or Mr. Elphinstone is the more useful and praiseworthy servant of the Lord."

"There is some truth in that remark, I confess," for the second time pronounced the colonel.

Little more conversation ensued, for the serjeant looking at his watch, begged their honours to dispense with his company, as it was near seven o'clock, and he had promised at that hour to be present at a love-feast at the little meeting-house at the extremity of the village.

"You are a pretty figure to be a member of a *love-feast!*" cried Frederick, laughing.

"It is not the outward, but the in-

ward

ward man which findeth favour with the righteous, your honour," replied the serjeant; "the insignificant clay returneth to dust, the immortal spirit ascendeth to its Maker;" and with an humble obeisance of his head he then quitted the apartment.

CHAPTER IV.

THE following day being Sunday, the family at the Hall attended church in the morning; and at the request of his son, who had very few acquaintance in the neighbourhood of his father's residence, and who was a great lover of society, the colonel introduced him to Mr. Elphinstone, and invited the latter to return with them, and pass the day at the Hall—an invitation which he readily accepted.

 Frederick

Frederick found the young divine what the world denominates a very pleasant young man; he was acquainted with all the usages of superior life, and possessed a portion of all those accomplishments which are necessary to secure an easy passport into polished society. He was equally conversant with all the anecdotes of high life as with the ordinary topics of the day; he was constantly furnished with a gleaning of motley knowledge reaped from newspapers, reviews, magazines, and ladies' tea-tables—rode to town once a-week, to see a new play, or assist to swell the benefit of a favourite actress—knew quite enough of the science of self-defence for a looker-on; on a velocipede he was actually dangerous; and, in short, he was in every respect qualified for a Bond-street lounger of the first water. His person was handsome, and the ladies voted him *ornamental;* Frederick was satisfied with finding him

useful

useful in introducing him into several assemblies, which he entered with the *bienaisance* of a man who esteems himself *quite a love* amongst the ladies. Vanity Frederick perceived to be his ruling foible, and he could not repress an inward smile, when, at the commencement of a sermon, he saw him place his cambric handkerchief convenient for application to his lips, and turn his ring into a situation to sparkle in the eyes of his auditors, and attract their regards to a tolerably-white hand, which he never lost an opportunity of displaying: but what most tickled the risible muscles of the unaffected lieutenant was, when, on the sudden or unexpected approach of females, his first action was to satisfy himself that his cravat had not shrunk from its exact situation, and his next to smooth his whiskers with a small pocket-comb, which he carried about him for that purpose.

A short time after this, chance hap-

pening to lead Frederick and the serjeant into conversation together—"Well, your honour," said the latter, "I observe you are become quite intimate with the young minister, and are no doubt pleased with his acquaintance."

"Indeed I am," replied Frederick—"I find him a very pleasant fellow."

"May you also find him a *good* and *devout* one! which is much more essential," answered Trimbush. "But I shall not use any farther arguments to prejudice you against him—indeed I believe his errors result more from a carelessness of doing what is right, than from a voluntary inclination to sin. He is yet young—increase of years may correct and amend him; he shall have my earnest prayers to Heaven to that effect. But, your honour, there is another point upon which I very much wish to have a little talk with you: don't you remember, the first afternoon you spoke to me about Mr. Elphinstone, your father

ther saying how becoming he considered it for every young man to marry early in life?"

"Yes, I believe I do," answered the lieutenant.

"It was an observation founded upon solid truth, your honour," returned Jedediah; "would I had been wise enough to have done so, I had then perhaps been a very different man, in every respect, to what I am now! A single life breeds innumerable evils, of which few are aware till they have experienced them, and sometimes not till it is too late to retract from the influence of pernicious habits. Do, sir, follow your honoured father's advice—think of settling yourself with some nice young lady for your wife as soon as you can; you must be happy—the voice of Heaven has annexed a blessing to the state of holy wedlock."

"Why then, candidly, serjeant," answered Frederick, "I should like very

much

much to be married; and if I could but find *the* woman I love, and gain her consent to my wishes, I would be married to-morrow, with my own goodwill; and I truly believe I should be one of the happiest fellows in existence."

"If such are your sentiments, your honour," returned Jedediah, "no doubt but you will soon see a woman whom you can love."

"I *have* seen such a one already," ejaculated the lieutenant; "did not you observe that I said—'If I could find *the* woman whom I love'?—and upon my soul, though I never saw her but twice in my life, I do love her to distraction; but I know no more where to seek her, than you do where to look for the longitude." The serjeant uttered an exclamation of surprise, and Frederick continued thus:—"No, by the anchor of hope! I never saw her but twice in my life, and the space of time occupied by the two interviews would not together make up

the

the sum of ten minutes; but still I feel that, whether we ever do, or do not meet again, I shall never feel for any other woman as I do for her at this moment."

"And may I ask you who she was, your honour?" said the serjeant.

"I don't know, serjeant—I don't know," was the reply.

"Nor her name, your honour?" rejoined Trimbush.

"No, nor yet her place of abode," answered the lieutenant: "Take away the knowledge of her person, so indelibly imprinted on my heart, and you know just as much of her in every respect as I do myself. It is altogether such a romantic, unaccountable piece of business, that I had resolved to keep the secret buried in my own breast; and I desire, serjeant, that, now I have been betrayed into entrusting you with it, it may never proceed from your lips to any individual being."

"It shall not, your honour," emphatically

tically pronounced the serjeant, laying his hand on his heart as he spoke.

A short pause ensued, during which Frederick appeared engaged in contemplating through his mind's eye the charms of his unknown enchantress; the serjeant broke the silence by saying —"And pray, your honour, where was it that you beheld this fair being?"

"I will tell you," replied Frederick. "It is now about fifteen months since (my ship happening to be lying off Portsmouth) my brother-officers and myself went on shore to spend a small share of prize-money which we had just received; we staid on shore all night, and a devilish jolly time we passed at the famous Old Fountain, I assure you. On the following morning, as we were proceeding to the harbour, to take the long-boat and return to the ship, with our heads (at least I can answer for my own) not altogether recovered from our spirited jollification, an over-driven ox

came

came running up the street; the passengers retreated in all directions to escape its fury, and a female flying for refuge to the door of a shop, against which I happened to be standing, in the trepidation of her alarm, absolutely rushed into my arms. I saw no more of the ox—my eyes became rivetted on the countenance of the stranger—and for the few moments that I gazed upon her, a thrill of ecstacy ran through my veins.

"Immediately shocked, as it appeared, at the freedom which she had involuntarily used, she hastily withdrew herself from me, and with a few scarcely-articulate words of apology, was departing.—'You cannot have sufficiently recovered from your alarm,' I said, 'to pursue your way alone; permit me to see you safe home.'—'Impossible, sir,' she replied; 'I beg of you to excuse me.'—'Have the condescension then,' I returned, 'to inform me where I may

call,

call, and hope to have the satisfaction of learning that you have not suffered beyond the period of your alarm.'—' I beg of you, sir, to leave me,' she answered; ' you have conferred an obligation on me in protecting me from the object of my fears, for which I must ever feel grateful to you; do not destroy the satisfactory impression, by pressing a request which I cannot grant.' These words, serjeant, were uttered in a tone at once so modest, so unassuming, but yet so decisive, that I had not the power of uttering a syllable in reply; and whilst I was reflecting how to act, she escaped me. This was our first introduction to each other; to describe her to you is impossible—I can only tell you that her eyes are black, her hair dark, her countenance altogether lovely, and her form graceful; but to the fascination which the union of her charms conveys to the heart, upon my soul I believe there is not language in existence to do justice."

"And was it long after this before you saw her again, your honour?" asked Jedediah.

"Between five and six months," replied Frederick, "and, as before, in the High-street of Portsmouth. A sudden order had just come down for us to put out to sea, and I had been dispatched on shore with a party of men to procure a stock of fresh provisions, and with a strict injunction from the captain to use all dispatch in returning, that he might not be disappointed of weighing anchor with the evening-tide. Various unforeseen causes had detained me to the last moment of my allotted time, and as I was hastening back to the boat, at that very instant—that unlucky instant, I encountered the possessor of my heart. I ran up to her, and detaining her in spite of her evident inclination to pass on, I, in a few hasty words, explained to her how awkwardly I was at that minute situated, and added—'I beg of

you

you to indulge me so far as to acquaint me where you reside, that I may have the happiness of seeing you at my return.'—'Indeed, sir,' she answered, 'I must decline informing you.'—'Only gratify me then with the knowledge of your name,' I exclaimed—'simply your name.'—'You must excuse my compliance, sir,' she said.—'You know not,' I returned, 'the interest, the——'

"With a slight curtsey she was moving from my side; I ventured to catch her hand, and was on the point of asking her (for what will not a sailor in love do to resolve his doubts?) if she were married? when her action of withdrawing her hand from mine (for it was the left which I had seized, relieved me of ten thousand apprehensions, for I perceived that the fourth finger was unencumbered by a ring; and I cannot but believe that she was conscious of the scrutiny which my eyes had been making. Thus encouraged by my own ideas

—'Only

—'Only say you do not hate me,' I exclaimed, 'and I will be passive—will be obedient—will be all you can wish.' —'I sincerely wish you happy, sir,' she returned; and then forcibly withdrawing herself from me, I was compelled to take a last anxious look, during which I think the impassioned feelings of my heart must have darted in fire through my eyes, and run to overtake my companions."

Frederick concluded his account by saying that he had since made every attempt to discover who she was, and where she resided, but in vain—very few of those persons to whom he advanced his inquiries ever recollecting to have seen her, and not any one of those who did so being able to satisfy him in the slightest particular relative to her history; her dress, he said, had bespoken the middle rank of life, but the elegance with which it was adjusted to her person

seemed

seemed to evince an acquaintance with the higher orders of society.

The serjeant remarked that it was certainly a singular adventure—"I wish, your honour," he said, "truly do I wish that you could obtain her, for I think that it would be for the happiness of your soul."

"Would to Heaven I could!" ejaculated Frederick, "for I am convinced that it would at least be for the happiness of my *life*;" and the conversation was not at that period pursued.

On quitting Trimbush, Frederick walked out upon the lawn; and perceiving his father leaning over the gate which opened upon the road, in conversation with some person on horseback, the legs of whose animal he could partially discern through the foliage of the hawthorn hedge, he moved towards them, and found the horseman to be Mr. Elphinstone.

"How

"How are you?" said Frederick; "wont you ride in?"

"Impossible," replied the divine—"this is an afternoon of inconceivable importance with me; I am just come to pop an old woman into the ground, and then I shall have but forty minutes my own to canter five miles across the heath to the Fox-and-Hounds, where my presence is indispensable at six o'clock. I suppose you have heard of the celebrated contest that takes place there this evening?"

"No," rejoined Frederick. "What is it?"

"A grand match, sir, between a mastiff and a monkey," answered Mr. Elphinstone—"one of the most magnificent things of the kind ever heard of; I have nearly seven hundred depending—no joke that, you know. All the science from town will be there. I back the monkey; but I will come and tell you

all

all about it after church on Sunday. Adieu! I shall not be long settling the old woman;" and clapping spurs to his horse, he galloped towards the church-yard.

The turn of the road had only for a few instants concealed him from their sight, when he appeared returning towards them.—" Did I tell you," he cried, " that the victory was to be decided only by the death of one of the parties?—Damned fine that, ain't it?—But I am sure I shall be late." He turned round his horse's head whilst speaking, and the progress of a few seconds once more obscured him from their view.

" Mr. Elphinstone," remarked Frederick, " appears to have the command of money, if we judge of his income only by his horses, servants, and dress, without pinning implicit faith on the hints which he is not unfrequently throwing

out

out relative to the length of his purse. Who is he—a relation of the late Mr. Murray?"

"Yes, he is," replied the colonel, "but in how near a degree appears enveloped in some obscurity. Whilst he was at college, the old rector used to speak of him as an orphan of a distant member of his family, whom he had adopted, in default of an heir of his own. But the gossip Fame, to whom, as being universally acknowledged to be an arrant fibber, entire confidence should never be given, whispers that Mr. Murray had a sister many years younger than himself, whose beauty captivated a young nobleman, greatly her superior both in rank and fortune; that, flattered and almost bewildered by the attachment of one by whose preference she considered herself so highly honoured, relying on his often-repeated vows of constancy and promises of marriage, she doomed herself, in an unguarded moment, to eternal repentance.

ance. Of the easy victory which he had obtained, her false suitor availed himself as a plea for receding from those engagements which might have repaired her honour in the eye of the world, and the subject of our conversation was the fruit of her error."

"And what became of the unfortunate mother?" asked Frederick.

"I never exactly heard," returned the colonel; "she is supposed to have died heart-broken, in some spot of seclusion to which she had retired, the victim of disappointment. Of what family the young nobleman was I never heard it even surmised, but it is rumoured that young Elphinstone receives a handsome annuity from that quarter."

"Do you think he is aware of his own situation?" rejoined the lieutenant.

"I should imagine not," answered the colonel, "from some conversation which I had with him relative to Mr. Murray's affairs, at the time of that wor-

thy

thy man's decease. But I repeat to you that the whole may be a fabrication; I never heard a tittle of the story vouched for by any one, though I have known it very generally spoken of by all the rector's old friends."

On the following Sunday, the family at the Hall had been returned home only a few minutes from church, when Mr. Elphinstone bustled into the apartment into which Frederick and his sister had retired, an expression of mingled triumph and delight animating his countenance, and threw down upon the table a small dark substance, which appeared to a casual observer to be part of a shrivelled mouse-skin.—"There," he exclaimed—"look at that! shall not I have the most whimsical bell-pull ever seen? What are eagles' talons and fawns' feet, compared to this? This is one of the paws of the identical and heroic monkey, which fought the battle at

the Fox-and-Hounds last Friday evening."

Frederick took it up, and convinced himself that it was what Elphinstone had represented it to be.—"Then the monkey was killed, I conclude?" he said.

"Oh, by no means!" returned Mr. Elphinstone—"there is not a more lively little bit of flesh and blood in existence than he is at this minute; no, no—in the fifth round the mastiff bit off his paw, and, upon my honour, I believe that was the principal cause of his ultimately becoming the victor, for the next moment he seized the throat of his opponent, and bled him to death without quitting his hold. Frederick, my boy, I netted full six hundred by the business, and the owner of the monkey sold me the paw for five guineas."

"And are you not ashamed," said Clarentine, "to confess that you make not only a pleasure, but a business, of

putting

putting poor animals thus to the torture?"

"Upon my honour, they quite like it," answered Mr. Elphinstone; "they enter into a contest with as much spirit as any pugilist can engage in a combat. Upon my life, you would have been extremely diverted if you had seen it."

"Shocked, you mean," rejoined Clarentine; "I think I should never be reconciled to myself again, if I could be induced to witness a scene so marked by want of feeling and the sentiments of humanity."

"If you sympathize thus tenderly with the brute creation," he returned, "what would you experience, if you were by chance to be a spectatress of a pitched battle between two scientific boxers?"

"Not a spark of pity, depend upon it," replied Clarentine. "The poor animals I commiserate, because they are made the tools of their unpitying masters;

ters; the scientific boxers of whom you speak are rational beings, and may choose for themselves. I may lament the folly which induces them thus to degrade their nature, but I cannot sympathize in the consequences which it produces."

Dinner being announced, the divine took up his monkey's paw and put it into his pocket; and the subject thus broken off, was not again resumed; Elphinstone perceived that it was one which Clarentine disliked, and he had his private reasons for desiring her to approve whatever he said or did.

In the evening, after the departure of Mr. Elphinstone from the Hall, Clarentine and her brother strolled together into the garden, and a few moments of silence happening to prevail—"A penny for your thoughts, sister," said Frederick, smiling.

"They were of so vague a nature," replied Clarentine, "at the moment you spoke, that I should be puzzled to express

press any subject to which they were more immediately directed than another."

"Perhaps not to a *subject* at all," answered Frederick, laughing involuntarily at his own attempt at being witty, "but to an embryo lord and master." Then looking archly in her face, he added—"The parson is a very pretty fellow."

"I consider him a puppy," returned Clarentine.

"Well-educated puppies are not uncommonly great favourites with the ladies," rejoined the lieutenant; "and whatever your opinion of him may be, I am sure he is very fond of you."

"I cannot believe it," answered his sister.

"Why so?" asked Frederick.

"Because," replied Clarentine, smiling, "he appears to me too fond of himself to be capable of liking any one else."

"Do you mean to say then that you

absolutely dislike him?" asked Frederick.

"Oh, by no means!" answered Clarentine; "I like him very much, in the same manner as I do all other amusing triflers. I like to hear my canary sing, I like to see my dog Frisk sit up and beg, and I like to see Mr. Elphinstone perform his diverting gambols."

"Well, in my opinion," rejoined Frederick, "I think there is at least as much to approve in him as there is to censure; we are none of us perfect, and seriously I believe him to be passionately fond of you—he swears you are the most beautiful woman he ever saw."

"Then he swears a great deal too much to mean any thing," answered Clarentine.

"Avers that you are a perfect divinity," resumed the lieutenant.

"In that science I believe we are much upon a par, brother," replied his sister.

"According

"According to his own account," rejoined Frederick, "there is not a sensation or passion with which you have not by turns inspired him; he is certainly desperately in love with you, and if you are thus steeled against him, I don't know how it is all to end."

"Not in *amazement* between him and me, depend on it," answered Clarentine.

A pause ensued; Frederick broke it —"Elphinstone," he said, "is a gentleman, a member of a most honourable profession, rich, esteemed, well-looking, and of an easy temper; I think, sister, as the saying is, 'you may go farther and fare worse.' But perhaps you don't intend to marry?"

"Oh yes, I do," replied Clarentine— "when the right man offers, as my aunt Thomasine says."

"And what kind of a man is it that you would prefer? I should be happy to hear," resumed Frederick.

"Not a ladies' man," answered Cla-

 rentine;

rentine, "but a man whom a lady need not be ashamed of preferring—one whose mind is more capable than my own—one who would himself soar above the trifles with which it might notwithstanding delight him to see me amused—one who could support me in affliction, advise me in difficulty, and by his manly affection and example, impart to me the reflected influence of his own stronger feelings; in dress, address, and education, a gentleman—but neither a beau, a boxer, nor a gambler."

"If you remain single," replied the lieutenant, "till you meet a being of the perfect nature you have been describing, I am very much inclined to believe you will be condemned hereafter to lead apes."

"Better so," answered Clarentine, "than to be puppy-led here. But enough of this matrimonial lecture for one evening; let us go in to supper."

The motion was carried *nem. con.* and

on

on entering the dining-room, they found the colonel engaged in fighting over an old battle, which for the present put to rout all recollection of their late conversation.

CHAPTER V.

It was now the middle of autumn, and the period fast approaching at which Frederick was destined to return to his ship; a few days previous to his departure, contriving to be alone with Clarentine—" Well, sister," he said, " you recollect what I told you about Elphinstone; I promised him to let you know his sentiments, and I have kept my word."

" I hope then," replied Clarentine, " that you have not concealed mine from him; for, of all odious characters,

 I should

I should most dislike to be estimated a coquette."

"It is impossible for him to require much information on the subject," returned Frederick, "beyond the frigidity with which you meet all his attempts to insinuate himself into your good opinion."

"So long as he is not deceived in me, I am satisfied," replied Clarentine.

"Absence, he says, can alone relieve his feelings, and he is consequently going to spend the winter in town; he has appointed a curate to officiate for him here in the country, and sets out next week."

"And he will carry with him my most friendly wishes," returned Clarentine, "that he may speedily discover some enchanting female, less blind to his merits and accomplishments than I confess myself to be."

"But tell me now candidly, sister, before I leave you," resumed Frederick, "for

"for you are a sly little rogue, and, I doubt not, can keep a secret with any woman in existence, is not that little fluttering heart of yours pledged to some more favoured swain?"

"Positively no," answered Clarentine; "I feel so happy in my present situation, that I am not at all ambitious of changing it. I have every recreation which indulgence combined with rationality can produce me, and the affection of the kindest relations, and what more can I desire? I have ever considered that those young women who appear so ready to unite their fate with that of the first man who invites them to accompany him to the altar, must have uncomfortable homes, and are driven to seek refuge beneath any roof which opens its portal to receive them."

"Then you allow nothing for the force of love?" said Frederick.

"Every thing, when it is tempered by

by judgment and discretion," answered Clarentine.

"By your own confession," returned Frederick, "you have not yet been caught in Cupid's net; when I see you again, I shall not be surprised to hear you singing your original air with variations, as your music-book calls it."

"No, no," answered Clarentine; "depend upon it, you will only hear the *da capo* of my old strain."

In the course of a few days Frederick quitted the Hall, and very shortly after Mr. Elphinstone called to bid farewell to its inhabitants; and his last adieu to Clarentine was murmured in a voice of languor, which the sigh on his lips appeared intended to proclaim the tone of his wounded feelings, whilst the smile on his countenance seemed to refute the existence of sorrow in his heart.

The winter passed with Clarentine, as many preceding ones had done, principally

pally in fireside amusements, occasionally chequered by visiting the dancing and card assemblies at the nearest market-town, and in the exchange of a few Christmas visits with the neighbours. The opening of the spring was with Clarentine the favourite season of the year, and at this period her rambles about the country, in which she delighted to watch the revival of nature's bloom, were pursued at all hours, and in all directions; like the bird which rejoices in its song at the serenity which succeeds a storm, and basks with delight in the sunshine which sucks the chilly drops of rain from its leafy retreat; with equal exultation did Clarentine hail the triumph of the genial spring over the dissolving locks of hoary winter.

In these excursions Miss Hewardine was generally her companion; and one inviting morning, early in the month of March, as they were passing within sight of Rebecca Searle's cottage, they

beheld her weeding the little garden which skirted her dwelling, and assisted in her labour by a young female, about eighteen years of age, of a most lovely countenance and graceful form, whose appearance created so strong an interest for her in their feelings, that they resolved, on their return home, to inquire of Jedediah Trimbush whether he was acquainted who she was?

An opportunity for addressing the serjeant soon presented itself, and Miss Thomasine immediately proposed to him the question of whether he knew who the lovely girl was whom they had that morning seen with Rebecca Searle?

"Alas, poor babe!" answered the serjeant, "she knows not that herself; she is one of the shorn lambs of this earth, but the heavenly Shepherd hath had pity on her. She is ignorant of her birth—she never knew a father's protection or a mother's love—she is the offspring of the benevolence of strangers,

and

and but for the blessed interposition of Providence, to strangers had her innocence fallen a victim and a prey."

"Poor thing! poor girl!" ejaculated Miss Thomasine; "what is her name? what do you know of her story?"

"The name which was given to her by those humane beings who protected her in her infancy," answered the serjeant, "is Geraldine Lascelles. As to her story, I have often wished to relate it to you, and to interest you in her behalf; and I am very happy, truly happy, good ladies, to hear you make the inquiry you have done; I am sure you will pity her, and I am sure you will comfort her, if you can; and indeed she wants human consolation to support her, in addition to the grace of Heaven, which she has already been so blessed as to have been visited with."

"But why did you forbear to make this communication to us before?" asked Clarentine.

"Why,

"Why, an't please you, good ladies," returned Trimbush, "I mentioned my wish to Rebecca, and she prevented me from putting it into effect. She said that as Heaven had empowered her to render some little friendship to the poor child, as she always calls her, if I made the story known to you, it might appear to you like blowing the trumpet of her own good works; and, taken in another point of view, you might consider it as a hint—a covered appeal to your generosity, to assist her in the work of benevolence which she had undertaken: and from the fear of her motives being misconceived, she prevailed upon me to remain silent."

Miss Hewardine and her niece highly applauded the delicacy of Rebecca's sentiments, and besought Trimbush to proceed immediately to the relation of Geraldine's history. The serjeant bowed obedience, and began his story; but as he interrupted his narrative by many

irrelevant observations and pious apostrophes, we shall give a concise account of the ill-starred Geraldine's past life in our own words.

It was now between seventeen and eighteen years since a tremendous storm, which arose off the Hampshire coast about the hour of sunset, one afternoon in the perilous month of December, threatened inevitable injury, if not destruction, to the vessels lying in the roads, the wind blowing with uncontrollable force upon the land. The darkness of the night increased the horrors of the tempest; and during the short intervals which occasionally existed between the roaring gusts of the storm, guns of distress, fired from a ship in the offing, were distinctly heard by those on shore; and the fishermen conjectured them to proceed from an East-Indiaman which had that morning anchored in the roads.

The part of the coast where the pre-

sent

sent scene of distress was passing was scantily peopled, fishermen forming the principal part of the inhabitants which it contained, with the exception of two or three small farmers, whose residence was placed at a little distance from the shore, and their friend and teacher, Benjamin Ebsworth, an evangelical preacher, of the most pious mind and benevolent heart, who had long resided amongst them, and been universally considered the parent as well as preacher of the hamlet.

Inspired by the example of Benjamin Ebsworth, the farmers excited the fishermen, not alone by urging the motives of humanity, but by the offer of a reward from their own pockets, to put off to the assistance of their suffering fellow-beings; but the fishermen unanimously declared it impossible for their boats to live in a sea foaming with the mountain billows which at that time agitated the ocean, and that their own lives must be

sacrificed

sacrificed in an attempt which they were convinced must be unsuccessful. The increasing violence of the wind gradually repressed even the entreaties of Benjamin Ebsworth himself, and he stood upon the beach, with his countenance turned towards the scene of danger, although not a speck of light existed in the atmosphere to guide his sight to the object of his anxiety, and silently offered up his prayers for the salvation of those for whom his heart laboured.

The firing continued unabated till nearly eleven o'clock; it then became less frequent; and immediately after the cessation of a sweeping hurricane, whose dreadful blast appeared to howl with supernatural fury, the guns were heard no more. Some feared that the vessel had sunk; others hoped that she had cleared the land, and made her way out to sea; but a few of the elder and more experienced fishermen apprehended that she

she had perished on the sands, as they considered the report of her latter guns to have announced her gradual approach towards the shore.

As the morning grew, the contention of the elements greatly subsided, and at the rising of the dawn, the only existing remnant of the late storm was the agitated bosom of the waters, still rising in curling billows, crested with the frothy surge. No sooner had the light of day become sufficient for their purpose, than the principal part of those who had on the preceding evening listened with unavailing sympathy to the unanswered guns, returned to the coast, to investigate whether any traces were visible of the destruction which they prophesied had been the consequence of the last night's wind. The sea was now retiring from the shore, and upon the sands which it had quitted remained sufficient evidence of the horrors which had marked the night; portions of the wreck,

fragments

fragments of sails, mariners' chests, and barrels of biscuit, lay scattered in all directions—and, more dismal still to the view, intermingled with lifeless forms, mangled and disfigured by the buffeting of the waves, and their encounter with the pebbly beach.

Whilst engaged in the contemplation of these melancholy objects, their attention was attracted from the dead to the living, by their descrying a boat which was contending with the ebbing waves, and endeavouring to force her way on shore. It contained only a few individuals, whose strength appeared nearly exhausted; and scarcely had they perceived her, ere one of the number was seen to extend into the air an oar, to which a strip of white linen was affixed, and which not being doubted by the fishermen to be a signal of distress and an appeal for assistance, a couple of boats were immediately hauled down to the water, and, with all the expedition which

the

the business would admit, were manned, and rowed off to the relief of the sufferers. The rolling billows bore them quickly out, and they were at length seen by their comrades on shore to approach the objects of their pity; but the strength of the receding tide rendered their return both laborious and difficult; in about three hours, however, the desired end was accomplished—the fishermen succeeded in towing in the boat, whose crew they found too much exhausted to be capable of exerting themselves in their own cause.

The number of the persons thus providentially preserved amounted to nine, seven of whom were sailors belonging to the wrecked vessel; and in company with these was a female, who had sunk exhausted, and apparently lifeless, at the bottom of the boat, and to whose breast clung an infant of about a year and a half old. From the sailors, who became the immediate care of the fishermen, it

appeared

appeared that the vessel which had perished had, in confirmation of the conjectures of those on shore, been the East-Indiaman, and that the individuals just landed were the only part of the crew who had escaped death. The female, they said, had been a cabin-passenger in the ship; that, almost maddened by a sense of her danger, she had flown upon deck at the moment they were descending into the boat, and in compliance with her entreaties they had permitted her to share their uncertain fate.

To the female, as the most pitiable object of the group, the attentions of Benjamin Ebsworth were directed; and he feared that life was extinct, both in herself and her infant. She had throughout the night been exposed to the inclemency of the weather, defended from its rigours only by the slight vestments in which, from their nature, it appeared that she had risen suddenly from her bed; and the infant state of her child

 rendered

rendered the hope improbable that it could have survived so trying a period: and although he more than apprehended that every effort to recall them into existence must prove ineffectual, he lost no time in conveying them to his dwelling, where his wife, who was the softened similitude of his own goodness, joined her endeavours to his to revive the spirit of animation in the exhausted sufferers.

With the female every means resorted to proved unsuccessful; but after a considerable time, during which warmth and friction had been administered with equal liberality to the infant as to its apparent nurse, contrary to the expectation of its benevolent entertainers, faint signs of returning life became apparent in it—but from the female the etherial spark had fled for ever. The child, which was a girl, became in a short time sufficiently recovered to display its repugnance to the presence of strangers,

and

and its inclination for the breast—the nourishment with which it had doubtless been accustomed to be fed, as the medical man who had been called to the assistance of the deceased pronounced her to have been in the habit of giving suck. Fortunately, however, as there was no wet-nurse to be procured in the neighbourhood of Benjamin Ebsworth's dwelling, it quickly discovered that it was also acquainted with the spoon; and the anxious solicitude and unceasing caresses of Mrs. Ebsworth acted powerfully towards reconciling it to its change of friends.

To no single inquiry proposed to the sailors, relative to the deceased and the surviving infant, were they capable of returning a satisfactory reply—they were merely acquainted that there had been several ladies passengers in the ship, and that some of these had brought on board with them their female servants; but they had so seldom seen

 them,

them, that they did not recollect any of their countenances, and were besides utterly ignorant who any of them were, or what their names. The ship, they affirmed, had sailed from Bengal. And in the course of a few days, having bade farewell to their hospitable entertainers, they proceeded to Portsmouth, which was only eleven miles from the spot on which their preservation had been effected, in quest of employment.

The linen worn by the deceased appeared to be perfectly new, and was unmarked—that of the little girl bore the initials of G. L.; and around the neck of the female was suspended, by a silken cord, a small crystal locket set in a narrow rim of gold, in which were enclosed a small lock of black and another auburn hair, and surmounted with the letters G. L.; and this appeared to be the only clue which could at any time lead to the discovery of her name and family. At a due period the unknown was

was interred in the burying-ground belonging to the village in which Mr. Ebsworth resided, and the little girl remained the peculiar object of his solicitude and protection.

In the course of the ensuing summer, an elderly widow lady, named Mrs. Ashton, who rented a small country residence in the neighbourhood of Mr. Ebsworth's dwelling, at which she usually passed a few months every year for the benefit of the sea air, arrived in Hampshire. She was a woman who, without being in the slightest degree tinctured with the tenets of Methodism, respected Benjamin Ebsworth for the unaffected piety of his heart, and constantly attended his little meetinghouse, when resident on the coast. To this lady the story of the preacher's little *protégée* soon found its way, and desirous of seeing the child, and hearing the account of her miraculous preservation from the lips of her protector, she

took an early opportunity of calling at his house, as it was not unfrequent for her to do, in the course of her summer residence by the sea.

Benjamin Ebsworth knew almost as little of the world as the innocent babe whom he was fostering; he was highly gratified by the interest which Mrs. Ashton displayed herself to take in the business, and besought her to advise him in what manner she considered that it became him to act, in prosecuting those endeavours which he felt it his duty to make for restoring the infant to her natural protectors, but to the promotion of which end he was himself utterly unacquainted how to proceed.

Mrs. Ashton replied, that an advertisement should be immediately inserted in the London newspapers, stating at full all the circumstances connected with the child—mentioning from whence the ship had sailed, the name of the vessel and of the captain, with both

of

of which he had been furnished by the sailors, and containing an explicit description of the locket bearing the cypher of G. L.

Benjamin Ebsworth fully coincided in opinion with his admonitress, and the advertisement was drawn up and enclosed by Mrs. Ashton to a friend of hers in town, for insertion in one of the most popular daily prints.

When the letter was delivered into the hands of the postman, Benjamin Ebsworth looked unusually sad, and his wife wiped away a stealing tear from her cheek with the corner of her apron. Mrs. Ashton observed their emotion, and could not forbear confessing that she did so. Benjamin Ebsworth spoke for both, and in few words explained the cause of their melancholy;—"Heaven, for its own wise purposes," he said, "did never bless us with an offspring; ultimately it sent unto us this sweet babe; we love it as our own, and——"

he

he paused—" if we should be deprived of it, we shall indeed most bitterly deplore the loss," he would have said, but he checked his words, and in their place he substituted—" The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be his name!"

" You are a truly-good creature," returned Mrs. Ashton, " and almost make me angry with myself, because I feel that I am deficient in sensibility, when I compare myself with you and Mrs. Ebsworth."

" Whilst you think thus humbly of yourself," replied Benjamin Ebsworth, " fear not that you are approved on high."

Mrs. Ashton turned her attention to the child, and the subject was not pursued.

Nearly two months passed away, during which the advertisement was weekly repeated, at the expence of Mrs. Ashton, and then discontinued. It now indeed

deed appeared as if the little foundling was not destined to be separated from her worthy cherishers; and Mrs. Ashton considering it right that she should be distinguished by some name, proposed to Mr. Ebsworth to give her one corresponding with the initials on her clothes; he agreed with her in opinion, and the little stranger was destined to be called Geraldine Lascelles.

Mrs. Ashton was possessed of a considerable fortune, a large portion of which it was the principal business of her life to dispense in charity to deserving objects, and representing to Mr. Ebsworth that it was not by any means improbable that the little Geraldine might eventually prove to be the descendant of a family of distinction, to which as unforeseen an accident as that which had thrown her upon his bounty might one day restore her, insisted that he should annually accept from her purse a hundred guineas, to be expended upon her education; and

 Mr.

Mr. Ebsworth, with truth and gratitude, pledged himself that her wishes should be faithfully complied with, and that, as Geraldine increased in years, her mind should receive cultivation in every branch of learning befitting her sex: for Benjamin Ebsworth, although an evangelical preacher, was not so strictly bound down by the fetters of prejudice as to conceive that the heart can be impaired by tuition, or that the truth which is desired to be inculcated prospers most advantageously in a soil from which all other culture is excluded; Benjamin Ebsworth adhered to the tenets of the faith in which he had been born and educated, but with his piety he united liberality of sentiments—that rare, that inestimable virtue, which ennobles alike the Methodist and the Episcopalian, the Roman Catholic and the Jew.

CHAPTER VI.



THE time rolled on unmarked by events of moment, till Geraldine had, according to the computation of her protectors, completed her tenth year, and Benjamin Ebsworth deemed it becoming that she should then be informed of such particulars concerning her own little history as had hitherto been withheld from her knowledge. From her infancy the temper of the young foundling had discovered itself to be amiable and pliant, and from the moment she had attained the age of reason, she had daily evinced increasing intelligence of mind; but her nerves and the tone of her disposition were not formed for the exercise of the stronger feelings—delicacy tempered all her thoughts and actions, and an almost

too-keen sensibility swayed her heart. Thus tenderly formed, most acutely did she suffer under the first serious cause for regret with which her even course of life had been marked; and the unexpected discovery, that those whom she so tenderly loved and so truly esteemed were not, as she had believed them to be, the authors of her being, appeared to her, at the first moment that the information reached her senses, like an eternal separation from their hearts and affections; the explanation, however, which ensued, restored her to composure, and she lived in the hope that she might never be called upon to exchange them for any other fosterers. To Mrs. Ashton, next to Mr. Ebsworth and his worthy helpmate, she delighted in displaying her gratitude and affection; and when that lady was residing in the country, her time was divided between her and the family of the good pastor.

Thus had passed away thirteen summers

mers since the introduction of Geraldine to the knowledge of Benjamin Ebsworth, when intelligence reached them from London that their respected friend Mrs. Ashton had paid the debt of nature. The information communicated affliction to the hearts of all—it was the first dissolution of the ties of friendship which the youthful Geraldine had experienced, and the reflection agonized her senses. Mr. Ebsworth permitted her to give free vent to the first ebullition of her grief, and then calmly admonished her on the sin of unrestrained sorrow—it was, he said, a tacit disapproval of the decrees of Heaven, and consequently one of our first duties to check its influence.

Geraldine exerted herself alike to obey him and the Power to whom he had directed her thoughts; but her chief consolation arose from reflecting on the happiness to which she could not doubt her beloved friend to be summoned.

The property of the deceased Mrs. Ashton

Ashton had consisted of an annuity, which had died with her—her numerous charities had prevented her from laying up any considerable savings during her lifetime, and amidst the few legacies into which the small sum of which she had died possessed was divided, one hundred pounds was bequeathed to Mr. Ebsworth, and another to Geraldine.

The shock which the family of Benjamin Ebsworth had experienced at the death of Mrs. Ashton had scarcely begun to be softened by the hand of time, when the violent attack of a pleuritic disorder, to which Mrs. Ebsworth had for many years been subject, appeared to threaten her existence; and before the rising of another summer, she too had sunk to repose from all earthly cares.

Geraldine was now of an age to comprehend that every being who enjoys the blessing of reason has his allotted part to perform on the stage of life, and that no individual is ushered into existence

istence without some portion of utility or importance being assigned to his charge on his earthly pilgrimage. Formerly Benjamin Ebsworth had been the soother of her cares and infantine afflictions—she now perceived that, piously as he endeavoured to subdue and to conceal his feelings, her assiduities and attentions were requisite almost to the preservation of his life, which sickened and sorrowed, although in silent suffering, for her who had descended to the tomb.—"Oh, thou blessing! thou peculiar gift of indulgent Providence!" he ejaculated, as he one day stood attentively viewing her, "I think—I fear, that, were it the dispensation of fate to snatch thee from me, I should not—could not be long of this earth."

"May Heaven avert the possibility of such a separation!" exclaimed Geraldine, throwing herself upon his neck.

"Kind Heaven avert it!" fervently repeated Mr. Ebsworth.

To verify, as it almost seemed, the adage which declares that "misfortunes never come single," Mr. Ebsworth had at this time another cause of anxiety preying on his mind, in addition to that which had been inflicted on him by the hand of death: within the space of the two last years, a new rector had been appointed to the parish in which he resided, and this new incumbent swerving from the steps of his tolerant predecessor, had used every means to prevent the assemblage of Benjamin's little congregation, and even to drive him, if possible, from the neighbourhood. At length matters wore an appearance of rising to so turbulent a height, that the peaceful preacker, in order to avoid the disquiet of mind arising from constant contention, unwilling as he felt himself to abandon his old hearers, accepted a call which he had received to another assembly, at a village about a mile distant from Portsmouth, which lay out of the jurisdiction

jurisdiction of his late oppressor; and bidding an affectionate farewell to those who had long possessed his warmest affections, he betook himself, with the divided feelings of hope and reluctance, to his new abode.

Mr. Ebsworth was at this time approaching towards his seventieth year; his constitution had never been robust, though temperance had rendered it healthy; and Geraldine with regret perceived that the unpleasant circumstances under which he had lately suffered had given a shock to his system, from which he might revive, but she feared that he would never totally recover. About a year and a half had been passed by him in his present habitation, during which the attentions and civilities that he received from his new congregation, added to the occasional visits of his old friends, appeared greatly to have composed his feelings (although the gradual encroachments of age upon his corporeal

system

system were every day becoming more visible), when his heart experienced a trial, the effects of which all those who were interested in his happiness augured that he would never perfectly overcome.

One morning, as he sat attentively listening to Geraldine, who was reading to him from one of his favourite authors, he was informed that a lady, who had just arrived at the little inn in the village, in a handsome carriage drawn by four posthorses, and attended by servants in splendid liveries, requested permission to wait upon him, as she had a communication of the first importance to make to him. Mr. Ebsworth, utterly at a loss whom to expect, or what communication to anticipate from a stranger of this description, could only reply that he should be happy to receive her commands. The message was conveyed, and, in the course of a few minutes after, a middle-aged female, elegantly dressed and of a smiling aspect, followed by a
servant

servant in a green-and-gold livery, was seen advancing along the footpath which led to Mr. Ebsworth's dwelling; and Geraldine concluding this to be the expected visitor, ran to her chamber.

The stranger introduced herself to Mr. Ebsworth by the title of lady Lefanu; she was, she said, the widow of sir Gerald Lefanu, now many years dead; and the occasion of her troubling him with her present visit, an advertisement, of a considerable age, respecting a child which had been washed on shore upon the Hampshire coast, which had most accidentally fallen under her observation only a few days before. The child described in the advertisement, she proceeded to say, was her own daughter; whilst resident in Bengal, her husband and herself had been prevailed upon to suffer her to accompany a female relation of theirs to England for the benefit of her education; that they had heard of the destruction of the vessel in which

she

she had embarked, and had from that moment conceived her lost to them for ever. The locket, she added, so particularly specified in the advertisement, contained a lock of her own, and another of her deceased husband's hair, and that she had herself fastened it upon the neck of her relative at their separation, with a strict injunction for her to transfer it to that of her daughter, as soon as she was capable of comprehending its value. And her account of herself being thus concluded, "the most important question," she continued, "still remains to be proposed. Is the loved being, whom I pant with all a mother's ardour to enfold to my heart, still in existence?"

Her inquiry having been replied to in the affirmative, she expressed the greatest impatience to behold the object of her anxiety; and Mr. Ebsworth quitted the apartment, to inform Geraldine of what had passed in it during her absence.

sence. One of Mr. Ebsworth's most impressive lessons to the child of his benevolence had been for her to bear constantly in mind the possibility of her being suddenly transferred from his protection to that of strangers, who derived from nature every claim for exacting her obedience and awakening her affection; the moment he beheld her, the expression of her countenance informed him that she had formed some suspicion of the truth—she threw herself into his arms, and bursting into tears, in scarcely-articulate accents—"Am I then doomed to leave you?" she asked.

"It is the ordinance of an all-wise and bountiful Providence," answered Benjamin Ebsworth, "which, now I am sinking into the grave, hath provided thee with another protector."

Geraldine did not reply, but clung still closer to his breast.

"Come, come, dry thy tears," added the worthy man, after a short pause; "can-

"can it be a cause of regret to thee that thou art restored to her who bore thee?"

Geraldine wiped the tears from her eyes—endeavoured to compose her countenance; and having imprinted an ardent kiss on his cheek—"Rely on me," she said—"fear not that I shall disgrace your instructions;" and gave him her hand to lead her to the presence of the stranger.

The first transports at meeting, on the part of lady Lefanu, were violent and ecstatic—on that of Geraldine, dutiful, and tempered by contending and undefinable sensations.—"This is indeed a moment of inexplicable happiness," pronounced her ladyship, who had resumed her seat, and still held one of the hands of Geraldine clasped in both her own; "to have seen you once more in existence—to have pressed you to my breast, when I had so long believed you consigned to an early grave—oh! I want words to express my joy!—And you,

sir,"

sir," turning to Mr. Ebsworth, "how shall I ever reward or repay you for having been a father to my child, and made her the angelic being I behold her? She is indeed a lovely creature—so innocent, so beautiful, I am almost out of my wits with delight!—And then such charming eyes!—I declare they are the exact resemblance of my poor dear sir Gerald's. How proud he would have been, if he had been alive, to have seen you!—And what is your name—what name have you gone by, my love?"

"Geraldine," was the mild reply.

"Geraldine!" echoed lady Lefanu—"Geraldine!—well I declare it is a very pretty name, and I like it infinitely better than your real one. You were christened Geralda—a name of your father's own invention, I believe, because he would have you called after him, he said; but I like Geraldine much better.

And

And do you think you shall love me, my angel?"

"I am prompted," replied Geraldine, "equally by the impulse of nature and of inclination, to devote to you my warmest affections."

"Oh, how charmingly, how elegantly that is expressed!" ejaculated her ladyship. "Oh, sir," she continued, again addressing Mr. Ebsworth, "what a clever girl you have made of her!—and depend upon it, you shall be made one of the happiest and most independent men in Britain for your pains."

Mr. Ebsworth was beginning to reply, that the reward of his conduct had arisen from his own feelings, and that, beyond this recompence, he coveted no other than that of being at all times convinced of the felicity of his foster-child; but the volubility of lady Lefanu interrupted his address.—"I must be a strange woman indeed," she ejaculated, "with my rank

rank and fortune, not to recompence the worthy gentleman who has restored to me my only child. The moment I return to town, I shall consult with my friends in what manner I can best procure your advancement in life; I am neither a mean nor an ungrateful person, I assure you, sir—no, indeed, sir; you shall soon receive proof that such is not the disposition of lady Lefanu." Then again addressing Geraldine—"And when will you be ready to go with me to London, my darling?" she asked.

"Myself and my actions are entirely at your disposal," answered Geraldine.

"Oh, what a sweet creature you are!" exclaimed her ladyship, again clasping her to her breast—"Lord bless you! how I shall love you!—I am sure there never was such a happy woman—such a delighted mother, as I am at this moment."

She then repeated her question of

when Geraldine would be ready to attend her; and after some little debate on the subject, it was determined, that as the days were at that season very short, it being the middle of the month of November, their journey should be commenced at an early hour on the following morning.

Apologizing for the limited accommodation of which his humble dwelling was capable, Mr. Ebsworth requested her ladyship to accept such entertainment as it could afford, and to pass the remainder of the day beneath his roof, instead of returning to the inn. Lady Lefanu accepted his invitation with the utmost cordiality, and whilst dinner was preparing, expressing a wish for Geraldine to accompany her in a short walk, for which she felt inclined after the confinement of the carriage, Geraldine acquiesced; and her ladyship strolling towards the little inn, gave directions that her servants should be amply supplied

with

with liquor, to drink the health of their young lady, as she termed Geraldine; and as they afterwards walked through the village, not a child who nodded a bow, or dropped a curtsey, to Geraldine, nor an adult who pronounced a blessing on her in passing, but were liberally rewarded for their reverence and their encomiums by her ladyship.

Neither Benjamin Ebsworth nor Geraldine had enjoyed many opportunities of observing the manners of the great and fashionable, but there was something in the conduct and language of lady Lefanu which did not exactly correspond with their ideas of the higher orders of society. For this observation Mr. Ebsworth in his own mind accounted, by the probability of her ladyship's marriage having been contracted in India, where he knew fair women to be by no means plentiful, and consequently many a plebeian, with a pretty face and engaging air, to have had the good for-

tune to assort her fate with that of a man in an exalted situation of life; and such he considered might have been the case with her ladyship.—" Was your ladyship married in India?" he took occasion, in the course of the afternoon, to inquire of her; and her reply in the affirmative satisfied him that his surmise had been a just one. Geraldine had so often heard the formality of people who resided entirely in the country ridiculed, that she concluded the unreserved manners of her ladyship must be congenial to the sphere in which she was living; and both were happy in observing that her heart appeared replete with good-humour, and overflowing with joy at the recovery of her child.

Previously to her retiring to rest, lady Lefanu presented Mr. Ebsworth with her address; it was at No. —, Upper Percival-street, Cavendish-square; and when she had placed it in his hand, said that she hoped he would sometimes write

write to Geraldine, and come and visit her as soon as possible.

To correspond with her, Mr. Ebsworth answered, would always give him pleasure, and should not be neglected by him; her invitation he must decline—he had never visited London, and it was a journey which he should now never think of undertaking.

"Well, if that is the case," rejoined her ladyship, "and you don't change your mind about coming up to town, I will bring down Geraldine, to pass a few weeks with you early in the summer."

After her ladyship had entered her chamber, Geraldine passed a considerable time with her revered protector, which was employed by the latter in lessons of admonition and prayers for her future happiness; and when the hour called upon them to separate, they bade each other that tender farewell which the presence of strangers had rendered less soothing and satisfactory to

 the

the heart of each: accordingly, on the following morning, when the carriage which was to convey Geraldine to her new home drove from the door of Mr. Ebsworth's little habitation, a few words only were uttered by them, but many tears fell involuntarily from the eyes of each at their last parting glance. Lady Lefanu endeavoured to comfort Geraldine by promises of her affection, and by assuring her that she should very soon see the good old gentleman again. Geraldine called a sense of duty to her aid, and became composed.

On reaching London, Geraldine found the house of lady Lefanu to be large and handsome, and her establishment considerable; and immediately on their arrival, her ladyship introduced her to three well-dressed and tolerably-handsome young women, who, she informed her, were her nieces, the orphans of her brother, whom she had protected since the death of their parents; and that she hoped

hoped Geraldine would not be jealous of their still continuing to share her partiality and favour. Such was not the disposition of Geraldine; and in terms of equal innocence with her feelings she expressed her sentiments, and was rewarded by the most flattering encomiums being bestowed on the excellence of her heart and temper.

Geraldine being recovered from the fatigue of her journey, and what her ladyship called settled in her new abode, that is, having passed three nights and a couple of days under its roof, found herself destined to undergo an entire change of dress and costume; and to this end celebrated milliners, mantuamakers, and hairdressers, were assembled round her, who, in the course of a few hours, transformed her into a being so unlike her former self, that, on inspecting her person in the glass, after the conclusion of their joint operations, she was more tempted to regret than to ad-

mire the alteration which had been produced, unanimously as the voices of her companions were loud in proclaiming the additional loveliness which both her form and features had gained from the bewitching hand of fashion.

Lady Lefanu's nieces struck Geraldine as being very good-tempered young women, but they appeared to have no ideas beyond those of adorning their persons to the best possible advantage—of visiting public places of amusement—and of endeavouring to augment the number of those admirers, of whom, from their constant hints and expressions, she could gather that they already possessed, or imagined themselves to possess, no inconsiderable proportion. In all their amusements, Geraldine, although she had as yet acquired little taste for their enjoyment, was always invited to participate equally with her ladyship's nieces; and the indulgence was enjoyed by them in rotation, her ladyship

ladyship never going into public attended by more than two companions at a time. At their visits to the theatres, the opera, or, in short, wherever the whim of the evening carried her ladyship, as well as in their drives in the Park or their wanderings through Bond-street, Geraldine remarked that lady Lefanu's acquaintance, with very few exceptions, appeared to be composed of gentlemen only, and that a swarm of what her nieces called beaux never failed to encircle them; at home likewise, whenever her ladyship entertained an evening party, or held a levee of morning loungers, the visitors were usually entirely of the male sex—a circumstance which chancing one day to remark to one of her nieces, the reply which she received was:—"My aunt detests cards and hates scandal—two things upon which almost all other women of fashion dote: and to one who dislikes them the con-

 versation

versation of the men is infinitely prefer-able."

The most assiduous of their attendants in public, and most constant visitor at her ladyship's house, was a young man named Charles Harley, with whom she appeared upon terms of almost a mother's intimacy, and whom she always called "cousin;" being, she said, a distant relation on her mother's side, but so far removed, that she would often, with a smile, confess herself unable to name the degree, and ask Charles if he could resolve the question, by which he regularly declared himself to be equally puzzled as her ladyship. Geraldine had been scarcely a month in London ere she was accused by lady Lefanu's nieces of having stolen the heart of cousin Harley; and although she listened with affected disbelief to this assertion, several marked attentions which he had paid her had for some days past led her to entertain

entertain the idea—an opinion from which she derived the opposite of satisfactory reflections, as Harley was a man, who, though polite and handsome, was too vain, too presuming, and in every respect too much unrestrained in his manners, and too lax in his principles, to produce a favourable impression on a mind which had been formed upon the pure basis on which the ideas of Geraldine had been established.

The weeks crept on till nearly another month had expired, Harley attaching himself every day more closely to Geraldine, and his attentions growing by degrees into a familiarity, against which she knew not either in what manner to defend herself or to seek redress; for whenever he attempted to snatch a kiss, or to draw her down by his side upon the same seat which he was himself occupying, it always produced a burst of merriment from the lips of her ladyship's nieces, and from her ladyship herself a

smile of encouragement, which was not unfrequently accompanied with the sarcasm of—"Oh, you little prude! what are you afraid of? do you think cousin Harley will bite you?" In addition to these perplexities, Geraldine remarked that on those evenings on which one of lady Lefanu's nieces and herself remained at home, cousin Harley almost invariably called in to take his tea with them; and that as soon as the equipage was removed, the niece regularly retired and left them together, which opportunities Harley never failed to employ for declaring his passion, and endeavouring, by every adulatory means, to insinuate himself into her favour; and notwithstanding the coldness with which her undisguised feelings prompted her to meet his advances towards her heart, it was with difficulty that she could prevent her hands from being constantly clasped in his, or his cheek from being pressed to hers.

Geraldine

Geraldine took an early opportunity of representing to lady Lefanu how unpleasantly she was situated, and begging her to release her from the dilemma in which she was placed.

"It is a very great pity," observed her ladyship, "that you can't see cousin Harley in the light in which he wishes to be regarded by you—for he is over head and ears in love with you: he is a sweet young man, and I am sure would do any thing in his power to make you happy. But I am persuaded you will think better of him in time. Do try and melt your heart a little, for I am certain it would drive him to distraction to give up his suit."

"He does not appear to address me," answered Geraldine, "with either the respect or delicacy of a man who desires to become my husband."

"Oh, my dear love!" returned her ladyship, "do banish such old-fashioned notions from your thoughts; they all come

come of your having lived so long in the country."

As Geraldine was about to reply, the subject of their controversy entered the apartment, and their conversation was thus necessarily broken off.

About this time one of lady Lefanu's nieces being invited to pass a few weeks with a friend at some distance from town, her sisters availed themselves of her absence for receiving the visit of an acquaintance, whom they introduced to Geraldine as Miss Villers, and of whose countenance Geraldine could not at first sight forbear imagining that she had some faint recollection; but in the course of a few hours the impression faded away.

The first evening that chance destined Geraldine and Miss Villers to remain at home together, lady Lefanu and her nieces had no sooner departed for the opera, than Harley, who had dined at the house, taking his regular station up-

on

on a part of the sofa upon which Geraldine was seated, expressed his impatience for the arrival of the tea-hour, which was no sooner past, than Miss Villers, tutored, as Geraldine could not forbear believing, in the conduct which she was desired to pursue, retired from the apartment in like manner as lady Lefanu's nieces had been accustomed to do on similar occasions; and Geraldine wishing to avoid the irksomeness of being alone with Harley, in the course of a few seconds gathered up her work, and was rising from her seat with the intention of leaving the room also, when Harley, forcibly detaining her, by catching one of her hands in his, and encircling her waist with his other arm, drew her back to the situation which she had been occupying, and said—"Pardon me, my divine creature! but, upon my honour, I cannot forego the happiness of your society for a single moment this evening—I have a point of the greatest

importance

importance which I wish to discuss with you."

Constrained to hear him, for he did not withdraw his hands, Geraldine continued indignantly silent. Harley immediately proceeded to recur to the subject of his passion, and dilated into a rhapsody of his love and his sufferings, during which his eyes were riveted on those of Geraldine, with a degree of ardour which appeared desirous of piercing to her very soul.—" If you wish me to remain your companion," at length pronounced Geraldine, " it must be on the condition of your changing the subject of your conversation."

" Impossible!" cried Harley, " impossible! Why will you thus cruelly deprive me of the bliss with which it is in your power to overwhelm me? To say I love, I adore you, conveys no idea of my feelings—my senses are paralysed by the affection which I bear you—my heart burns, consumes under the devouring

ing passion with which you have inspired it."

Attempting to check his bombastic effusions by the affectation of indifference to what he was uttering, Geraldine resumed her work.

"For Heaven's sake, listen to me, thou most adorable being!" exclaimed Harley, snatching it from her, "and let nothing for a few moments divide your attention with me. Away, thou envious thimble!" he added, slipping it from her finger with a smile which the expression of his eye rendered almost terrific, and dropped it into her breast.

"This, sir, is a liberty," said Geraldine, starting from her seat, "which I cannot forgive; I command you to unhand me, and not to interrupt my progress;" and snatching one of the candles from the table, she darted out of the room, and proceeded towards her chamber. As she ascended the stairs, she heard the footsteps of Harley, who was

smothering

smothering a laugh, following her: alarmed at his conduct, she quickened her steps; but he overtook her at the moment she had reached the door of her apartment, and caught her in his arms. —"Is it possible, my enchantress," he cried, "that you can be really offended at such a trifle?—Come, let us kiss and be friends, and then I shall be sure you forgive me."

He followed his words by impressing his lips upon one of her cheeks; and Geraldine, in her terror, uttered a loud shriek, accompanied by the cry of—"Help!"

"You are a foolish little puss," ejaculated Harley, freeing her from his grasp —"you will know better by-and-by;" and laughing as he proceeded along, she heard him descend the stairs.

Unaccountable as she considered the conduct of Harley, equally strange did she regard it that none of lady Lefanu's servants had appeared to answer her

cries,

cries, which, from the exertion of voice that she had used, could not have failed to reach them. Whilst she stood in the doorway of her chamber, irresolute how to act, she heard a light footstep approaching her, and on turning her eye in the direction from which it proceeded, perceived Miss Villers.

"Go into your chamber," said the latter, in a low tone of voice, "and I will follow you."

When they had entered it—"You have been alarmed?" she continued.

"I have indeed," replied Geraldine.

"Is this the first time you have received an insult of the kind from Harley?" asked Miss Villers.

"Yes," answered Geraldine, "at least of so gross a nature as that which I have just experienced."

"I am glad of it—truly glad of it," rejoined Miss Villers. "But shut the door, and let me speak to you."

Geraldine followed the direction of

her companion, who then looking earnestly in her face, said—" Don't you know me? Surely you must recollect me?"

" I thought that I remembered something of your countenance when first I saw you," replied Geraldine; " but I have since believed myself mistaken."

" But you are not," rejoined Miss Villers. " Surely you can't have forgotten Nancy Wilmot? My poor father made all your shoes, and good Mr. Ebsworth's too, before you left our village, and went to the neighbourhood of Portsmouth. You must remember me now?"

" Yes, yes, I do recollect you—I do indeed," answered Geraldine; " but you are very much altered since I saw you last."

" No doubt of it," returned Nancy; " it is partly accounted for by the difference of my dress, and the unhappiness of mind which I have suffered for some time past has changed me more than all.

Heaven

Heaven be praised for the chance that led me to this house! From the moment I saw you here, and learned that you were still innocent, in gratitude for the many services my dear father received from him that brought you up, I resolved to save you, if it was in my power."

"Save me!" echoed Geraldine.

"Yes, save you," replied Nancy—"save you," she repeated, from the miserable situation to which I have condemned myself. Oh that I had never left my poor father! Oh! I fear—I fear that my wickedness and disobedience broke his heart—oh God, forgive me! for he is dead—long dead and gone; and, now I am repentant, I have neither father nor home to go back to." She burst into tears, but struggling to suppress them, she continued to address Geraldine, upon whose tongue astonishment had imposed silence.—"There is no fear of our being interrupted just now," she said,

said, "for I heard your enemy Harley leave the house, and you must leave it too, if possible, before morning."

"Oh, for mercy's sake, explain what it is you mean!" ejaculated Geraldine.

"Promise me then not to let your spirits sink—whatever I may unfold to you, preserve your fortitude, for fear of the consequences, if your mind should be thrown off its guard," replied Nancy Wilmot, "and I will be as explicit as I can. This house is the abode of licentiousness; lady Lefanu is no more your mother than she is mine, and her pretended nieces are unfortunate beings, like myself, subject to her arbitrary power, who exist by despising themselves. The man whom she calls her cousin Harley, is a nobleman whom you have had the misfortune to captivate, and in compliance with whose wishes and instructions, she has decoyed you by a false tale from your protector; and, either to-morrow or the day after, it is intended

intended that he should carry you off to some retired habitation of his own, where a sham marriage destines you to eternal misery."

Geraldine sunk upon a chair by the side of her new friend; she could not speak—she could not weep—she could only gaze upon her promised deliverer, with an expression of gratitude too eloquent to be misunderstood.

After a short pause—"Are you possessed of any money?" asked Nancy Wilmot.

"I have a little in my pocketbook," answered Geraldine—"the remnant of dear Mrs. Ashton's legacy—only four pounds and a little silver."

"That is sufficient for your purpose," rejoined Nancy; "if you had not been thus furnished, I would have procured it for you, difficult as I might have found it to have done so. And now, my dear young lady, pay the greatest attention to what I am going to say to you.

In

In about an hour I expect a person to call upon me, whom I shall be compelled for some time to entertain: when I quit you to receive the visit of the person of whom I have spoken, come up to your chamber, put on your cloth pelisse and plain straw bonnet; and having done so, go fearlessly down stairs, and quit the house. It is a bright moonlight evening, and therefore, on entering the street, you will not be at a loss to pursue your way. On leaving this house, turn immediately to your right hand, and at the first corner you will perceive a stand of coaches, get into one of them, and——"

"I shall never be able to accomplish it," ejaculated the trembling Geraldine.

"You must accomplish it," replied Nancy, "or—reflect on what I have told you."

Geraldine shuddered.—"Yes, yes, I will assume courage—I will do exactly as you direct me," she answered.

"When you have once quitted this

house,"

house," returned Nancy, "you can have nothing to apprehend from those whom you have cause to dread whilst you remain in it; and if your footsteps should be heard as you are leaving it, you will only be supposed to be my visitor departing. When you have entered one of the coaches, which, I have already told you, you will find at the corner of the first street on your right hand, order yourself to be conveyed to the Angel Inn in the Strand; and when you alight, only acquaint the people who receive you, that you are come to go down to Portsmouth, by the coach which runs from their house, and they will render you every service till the hour for its departure arrives. And now repeat to me the instructions I have given you, that I may be certain you can commit no error in your proceedings."

Geraldine obeyed, and proved herself to have accurately digested the directions of her companion.

"Heaven send you safe to your worthy guardian!" ejaculated Nancy Wilmot. "And now," she added, "let us go down into the drawing-room, and await the arrival of my visitor."

Nancy went down first, and in a few minutes Geraldine followed her. When they were for the last time seated together before that fire which now smiled upon them—"Sincerely do I wish," said Geraldine, "that you could point out to me any means by which I might return the obligation that I owe you."

"There is but one way," replied Nancy —"if you could interest your worthy guardian to rescue me from my present miserable life, I care not how humble the situation to which I consign myself —it cannot be too mean for my wishes, if it only provides me with daily bread and a peaceful heart."

"Rely upon it, that my endeavours to that effect shall be used," answered Geraldine. "You know the goodness

of

of Mr. Ebsworth's heart—you have often heard him expatiate on the virtue of repentance, and I am sure he will not neglect to serve you, if the means of so doing can be found."

Their conversation had been only of a very few minutes' duration, when a summons arrived for Miss Villers to attend her visitor.—"Now then," said the unfortunate girl, embracing Geraldine as she spoke—"now then, farewell! perhaps—but I hope not—for ever!—Do not forget me, sweet Geraldine!—above all, be careful to follow implicitly the instructions which I have given you. Once more farewell, and Heaven protect you!" and endeavouring to check the tears which she could ill conceal, she darted out of the apartment.

In a short time after, Geraldine ascended to her chamber, and having equipped herself in the manner recommended by her friend, with an effort of which she scarcely believed herself capable, she

 flew

flew down the stairs, and darted into the street. She ran forward as swiftly as she was able, and was scarcely satisfied that she had really effected her escape, till she found herself in motion in the hackney-coach into which she had precipitately thrown herself.

On her arrival at the inn, she found the explanation which she gave sufficient, as Nancy Wilmot had preinformed her, to procure her a polite reception and a comfortable apartment; and she awaited the destined period for the setting out of the coach with more composure than she believed it possible that she could have endured several hours of solitude in a strange house, in that bustling metropolis, from intercourse with whose inhabitants she had always heard the inexperienced had so much to fear; she however gained from this short trial a slender insight into the truth of a sufficiently-stocked purse being everywhere alike a passport to comfort and

civility;

civility; and at length, to her unbounded delight, she found herself seated in the vehicle which was to convey her to Portsmouth.

During her journey, her thoughts were all of the joy which she should experience at once more clasping her beloved benefactor to her heart, and dwelling on the gratitude with which he would be inspired to Heaven for her preservation, and, under Heaven, to the pitiable yet generous being whom it had made its earthly agent of her salvation. From a reverie of this nature she was aroused by the rattling of the carriage-wheels upon the pavement of the wished-for town; and the moment it arrived at the spot of its destination, springing from the step with a light heart and dancing brain—"But another half-hour," she mentally exclaimed, "and I shall indeed behold him!"

The habitation of Benjamin Ebsworth was only three quarters of a mile from the

the skirts of the town, and tripping eagerly along, its white chimney and thatched roof soon presented themselves to her view; at length she reached the door, and lifting the latch, entered the house. Finding no one either in the kitchen or parlour, she ascended the stairs, and proceeded to the chamber of him whom she sought. On going in, she was surprised at encountering the faces of two or three strangers; but the next instant her eye wandered to the bed, and upon it she beheld her venerable protector extended, a shrouded corpse.—" Dead! dead!" she exclaimed, and with a stifled shriek sunk senseless upon the floor.

CHAPTER VII.



At this period of his narrative the voice of the serjeant became choked and his articulation indistinct, and the application of his handkerchief to his nose, and two or three sharp hems, were necessary to clear his utterance for proceeding—a tenderness of heart in which the tears of his auditors eloquently displayed their sympathy.

The sequel of poor Geraldine's story was short. On recovering, she found herself supported by the arms of a well-known friend; and this was no other than the amiable Rebecca Searle. Rebecca and her late husband had been the most intimate and best esteemed of Benjamin Ebsworth's friends—William

 Searle

Searle and himself had been long labourers in the same vineyard of righteousness, and knew the excellence of each other's dispositions—the most efficacious bond which can unite the hearts of men; and since her husband's decease, his widow had never failed to pass a night at the dwelling of their friend Ebsworth, when travelling through the part of the country in which he resided, upon occasional visits of admonition to the hearers of her late husband, but which, on account of her increasing years, were now becoming less frequent with her than they had formerly been; and by one of those chances which, from the consolation they impart to the feelings, men not unusually delight themselves with supposing providential, at the time of Mr. Ebsworth being seized with the illness which terminated his existence, and of which the whole duration was not more than twenty-four hours, Rebecca was an inhabitant of his little dwelling, and

and he enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing that she would close his eyes.

"We are all aware, my good ladies," continued the serjeant, "that although it is difficult to refrain from lamentation at the death of those whom we have esteemed, no tears will restore them to existence; and fortunate is it for the hapless survivor of a deceased benefactor, when Providence has provided for her relief a sympathizing and willing heart to repair her loss; and such did the worthy Rebecca Searle prove herself to the poor Geraldine, thus cast a second time an orphan on the face of the world. —'Where shall I now turn me for protection or refuge?' she exclaimed, in the first agony of her grief.—'To me,' answered Rebecca—'to me; in my heart shall you find love, in my cot a welcome.'—'Oh! I cannot consent,' replied Geraldine; 'you are far from affluent—I cannot burden you.'—'You will not be a burden to me,' rejoined Rebecca;

 'for

'for those who are cheerful and content the Lord provides.' And he has provided for her, my good ladies, and a blessing accompanies all her actions," the serjeant concluded his account by saying.

Still more interested, if possible, by the extraordinary history of Geraldine than they had ever been by her inviting appearance, Clarentine and Miss Hewardine requested Trimbush to make it his business to call that evening at Rebecca's cottage, and express their wish to introduce themselves to Geraldine's acquaintance—a message with which the honest serjeant was so delighted at being charged, that, after having replied—"Your commands, good ladies, shall be gratefully and devoutly obeyed," in the animation of his spirits he added—"Quick step, march!" and hobbled out of the room at a much quicker pace than he had for some time past been seen to move.

On

On the return of Jedediah, they found the following morning fixed for what Rebecca denominated the pleasure, and Geraldine the honour, of their visit. At the time appointed they reached the little gate in front of Rebecca's dwelling: on their entrance, they were first struck by the extreme neatness of the place, and on their introduction to its inhabitants, by the display of easy and unabashed manners which might have done credit to a drawing-room. Rebecca Searle they immediately discovered to be what the tongue of common fame had reported her—simple, unaffected, benevolent, and pious; whilst in Geraldine they found the very being whom, jointly from the serjeant's description and their own conclusions, they had prophesied her—amiable and contented, diffident and thankful. A good intention readily unfolds itself, and the inclination to render a service is eloquent even in silence: thus the benevolent

 motive

motive of the visitors to the cottage formed their best introduction, and the satisfaction and gratitude of their entertainers their best welcome; and in the course of half an hour they were become more intimate than many fashionable friends find themselves at the end of a seven years' acquaintance.

Rebecca Searle heard with pleasure the invitation given Geraldine to visit the Hall—" I am growing old myself," she said, " and I now never go from home, except to the meetinghouse, or to visit a sick neighbour—infirmity has put an end to my wanderings, which were once extensive; but young people require to go abroad sometimes."

" I should certainly feel much happiness in accepting the invitation of these ladies," returned Geraldine; " but I should be loth to leave you alone."

" I am never alone, my love, recollect that," replied Rebecca Searle, laying her hand as she spoke upon a Testament by her

her side. The following day was accordingly appointed for Geraldine to dine at the Hall, to which it was agreed that Trimbush should be her escort.

The story of Geraldine had already been detailed to the colonel, and he had likewise been apprised that he was that day to be introduced to her at table; but he did not by any means appear to anticipate the agreeable addition which his sister-in-law and his daughter imagined that she would prove to their society. The colonel, we have already said, was a good and a sensible man, but both his goodness and his sense, as we have likewise noted, were of a peculiar cast; he had no idea of any forms or opinions which were incongruous with his own sentiments, consequently he regarded all dissenters from the doctrine in which he had been educated as either fools or madmen—a conclusion in which the overstrained zeal of Trimbush, not unnatural to a man lately brought to repentance,

repentance, had not a little tended to strengthen him; and he thought that a girl, however pretty and clever she might be, whose head was stuffed with the wild-goose notions of old mother Searle (an epithet which no arguments could induce him to disunite from the name of Rebecca, considering her, as he said, as a religious sort of a witch more than any thing else), must at best prove very queer sort of company for people who had been brought up to the rules and ordinances of the established worship, and did not trouble themselves about religion, except when they were at church or saying grace.

During dinner, at which conversation was sparing, the colonel's eyes were again and again turned towards Geraldine, fascinated, as it seemed, by her appearance. When the cloth was removed, he addressed himself almost singly to her; and when she assumed confidence to converse familiarly with him.

him in return, it was with difficulty that he could restrain himself from openly avowing the admiration with which she inspired him—with which admiration was blended no inconsiderable degree of surprise; her conversation evinced the rectitude and purity of her heart, but neither anathemas nor exhortations proceeded from her lips—Geraldine, the pupil of Benjamin Ebsworth and Rebecca Searle, proved herself only a respecter of virtue and a believer in Christianity. The colonel was astonished, and before the ladies quitted the dining-room, he whispered Miss Thomasine that he should not wonder if there turned out to be more good in the old woman she lived with than he had once thought for.

As they became more intimate, the colonel grew very fond of hearing Geraldine's story from her own lips, especially the account of her extraordinary journey to London; and he declared that

that he would make it his business, if possible, to find out the old hag who had pretended to be her mother, and punish her for her villainy at his own expence. The colonel's promises were not unseconded by his efforts; he wrote to a friend in the law in the metropolis, offering the most liberal reward for the discovery of the infamous being from whose toils Geraldine had so narrowly escaped, and also for any information which could be obtained respecting Nancy Wilmot, of whom, he said, if she could be found, he was determined to make an honest girl; and that he would take her into his own service, if no other means for providing for her could be devised. But, as every one acquainted with the transaction had suspected, lady Lefanu was not known in London; nor had any person, corresponding with her description, ever resided at the house in the neighbourhood of Cavendish-square, to which she had given Mr. Ebsworth a direction,

direction, as being the one which she inhabited; and poor Nancy Wilmot was alike inquired after in vain.

"Well," exclaimed the colonel, one day when he had been recounting to Geraldine the disappointment of his last hope of bringing the pretended lady Lefanu to punishment, "I think there seems as little chance of falling in with that old beldame as there does of discovering your parents; but never mind, if they were here, they could only be friends to you; and depend upon it that you are amongst friends as it is, who will never desert you as long as they live. I know this, for my own part—I don't care whose daughter you are—not I; I only wish you were mother to a grandson of mine. Nay, nay, don't blush—don't mind me—I am little better than an old woman now; but, I promise you, I have a boy—a son, that I think would tickle your heart if you saw him; he is just as fine a fellow as you are a girl—

devilish

devilsh handsome too, I promise you. He is a naval officer, is my Frederick: how should you like a sailor, eh, my girl?"

Geraldine blushed still deeper than before, and moved to the window.

The colonel began whistling an old march, and muttering between the bars —" A devilish handsome couple they would make, or I never smelt gunpowder!" whistled again, and marched leisurely out of the room.

When the colonel was out of hearing —" Well, my dear," asked Clarentine, laughing, " what do you think of my father's proposal?"

" From what I already know of your family," answered Geraldine, " I am almost certain that there cannot exist a member of it in whose acquaintance I should not feel happy to be ranked. The brother of Clarentine," she added, pressing the hand of her whom she addressed, " if he at all resembles his sister,

ter, it would of all things give me satisfaction to be allowed to call my friend; but, even admitting the unlikely possibility that whenever we do meet he should entertain for me the same sentiments which his father has just honoured me by declaring, friendship must be the closest tie by which we could ever be united."

"Indeed!" replied Clarentine: "on what account?"

"Because," returned Geraldine, "I have resolved never to unite my destiny with that of any man of superior rank to the degree of life in which I consider myself to move. Till an unequivocal disclosure of my birth takes place, it is my determination to regard myself as the humble offspring of my deceased protector, Benjamin Ebsworth. I am utterly ignorant who I may be—perhaps of the meanest origin and of the most ignoble parents; and oh, my friend! the most painful sensation which, according

ing to the ideas that I have formed, my heart could ever be ordained to endure, would be that which must arise from my having given my hand to one whom the eventual discovery of my comparative humility in the scale of worldly estimation might lead to consider me a blot upon his race."

"Your opinion on this subject," rejoined Clarentine, "like every other sentiment which I have heard you express, is highly honourable to your heart; but a man who is in himself truly amiable, and who really loves you, would soar above such paltry distinctions."

"As a lover perhaps," returned Geraldine, "for love is blind; but matrimony is sharp-sighted, and therefore it becomes those who enter into its bonds to guard against the possibility of any reproach subsequently attaching itself to them or their conduct, from the concealment of prior facts or contingencies."

"This is excellent morality," replied Clarentine

Clarentine, "and no one can more admire the delicacy of your feelings than I do. But now, my dear girl, just for conversation's sake, suppose this brother of mine, who, I assure you, is very handsome and very accomplished—and I dare say, if he were not my brother, I should add 'bewitching'—and who, I have no doubt, will pay us a visit in the course of the approaching summer—suppose, I say, that he should behold you in the same interesting point of view in which my father sees you, how do you imagine you should think of him in return?"

"It is impossible that I can predict what would be my opinion of one whom I have never seen," answered Geraldine.

"Oh, but indeed it is possible, and very possible too," rejoined Clarentine; "for instance, did you never form an idea, either pleasing or the reverse, of any prospect, painting, building, or plant, which you had heard described?"

Geraldine

Geraldine smiled, but remained silent.

"Well, my dear," continued Clarentine, "you may form an idea just in the same manner of a man whose qualities have been sketched out to you. But perhaps," she, after a short pause, archly proceeded by saying, "you have some image floating in your brain, that would throw my poor brother into the background of your favour, if he were even one of Raphael's lady-killers, who had walked down from the canvas to receive animation, and be gifted with all the accomplishments of a perfect human being. You begin to look serious, I declare—nay then, I am sure I am right; and as I know you would scorn to tell a fib, I am certain to receive your confession, either verbally detailed or silently admitted."

"I believe you are well convinced," answered Geraldine, "that I could not upon any occasion be tempted to utter a falsehood; to your confidence therefore

fore I willingly entrust that I have beheld one whose appearance and manners carried greater weight with them to my feelings than those of any other person with whom I ever conversed; but who he was I know not; and I am likewise certain that he was not possessed of the knowledge either of my name or residence. Our acquaintance was only of a few minutes; I confess that he wished it prolonged, but I refused his request; and as he is beyond all doubt of a rank in life far above that sphere with which I am resolute in classing myself, I have strenuously endeavoured to obliterate him from my memory and my heart. I have imparted to you the truth without reserve, and now request of you the indulgence of never reverting to the subject."

"You are a strange—a good girl," replied Clarentine, "and it would be a cruelty not to accord with you in those feelings which appear to constitute so

considerable a portion of your happiness.' "I will obey you, depend on it; but if at any time my advice can assist your dilemmas, or my exertions forward your wishes, remember that I am your sincere friend, and expect you to call upon my services without reserve."

The summer was now rapidly advancing, and towards the conclusion of the month of June, the colonel was induced to consent that Clarentine, under the guardianship of her aunt Thomasine, should join the party of a lady and gentleman in their neighbourhood, who, with their two daughters, were going to pass a few weeks at Cheltenham.— "By all means go," pronounced the colonel, when the proposition was advanced to him for his approbation; "Heaven knows, I don't wish to confine you prisoners to the Hall, because I prefer it myself to every other place. But I must confess that I cannot conceive there can be much difference between the air of

Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire and that of Hampshire; nor does it appear to me that either of you have much occasion for drinking the waters; but go and try the experiment—I am sure I have no objection."

"Why, it is not exactly on account of the air, or the waters either, that I vote for the excursion, brother," remarked Miss Hewardine: "Clarentine is now of an age when it becomes young people to be introduced to a little acquaintance with the world: I have often heard you affirm, that there is not a man in this part of the country whom you would willingly accept as your son-in-law; and indeed I think, with your fortune and Clarentine's pretensions, you are very right in that particular: and, thus agreed in one respect, brother, I think you will not hesitate to confess that I am correct in supposing that, in justice to you and herself, she ought to be seen at some distance from home, and have her ideas of life a little enlarged, by mixing for a

short time with the varied society that a watering-place naturally assembles."

"Well, well," answered the colonel, "I am content—so be it—fight the battle your own way; but take care no fool's trick is the end of this jaunt; remember, sister Thom, I hold you accountable for the girl's conduct."

Miss Thomasine smiled a significant and satisfactory reply; and at the appointed time set out with her niece on their promised excursion, leaving it in strict charge to Geraldine and the serjeant to double their assiduities for entertaining the colonel, and thus lightening to him, as much as possible, the period of their absence.

About a fortnight after the departure of Clarentine and her aunt, the colonel was one day surprised by a visit from the reverend Mr. Elphinstone—surprised, because, on the preceding day, which was Sunday, he had attended divine service, at which his curate had officiated;

and

and in the course of the conversation which had passed between him and the colonel, at quitting the church, not a hint had been dropped of his expecting Mr. Elphinstone in the country.

A few commonplace sentences had only passed between them, when Mr. Elphinstone, declaring himself unable to control the subject by which his feelings were agitated, proceeded to inform the colonel, that having passed the most miserable of winters, as he expressed himself, in London, to which he had flown in despair, in consequence of the coldness with which his idolized Clarentine had met all the advances which he had endeavoured to make towards her heart—unable longer to endure the state of suspense under which he had for so considerable a time past been suffering, he had travelled from town, for the sole purpose of proposing himself as her husband, and receiving his doom from her lips. The colonel replied, by informing

him of the absence of his daughter from home; and Mr. Elphinstone then requested that he would indulge him by communicating his proposals to her by letter. The colonel answered, that he considered every gentleman had a claim to have his suit laid before the lady whom he wished to address, and that, thus impressed, he could not hesitate to comply with his request; "but at the same time," he added, "I wish you perfectly to understand that I shall not in the slightest degree attempt to bias the opinion of my daughter; I feel convinced that Clarentine will never marry without consulting my feelings on the subject, and I have in return resolved never to influence her choice; when she asks my opinion of any individual whom she may wish to present to me as a son-in-law, I then consider it to be time enough for me to express my sentiments concerning him. I have already promised you that I will write the letter

you

you have expressed a wish that I should address to my daughter; but indeed, for my own part, I deem it superfluous—Clarentine is neither of a coquettish nor a changeable disposition; and, depend upon it, that if she has, as you aver, retired from your marked attentions, she has not done so without having formed a decision which nothing but a miracle can subvert."

Mr. Elphinstone still vehemently pressed for the dispatch of the letter; the colonel accordingly repeated his promise to that effect; and Mr. Elphinstone professing himself all rapture at his compliance with his wishes, and all anxiety for the issue of his suit, shortly departed, stating that he was under the necessity of immediately returning to London, and leaving the colonel in possession of his town address.

The colonel was a man who never swerved from his word, and accordingly, not long after the departure of his visitor,

tor, he addressed to his daughter a full statement of what had that morning passed between himself and Mr. Elphinstone; to which, without a single comment on the subject, he only requested that her decided answer might be transmitted without delay, for the satisfaction of her expecting suitor; and his letter being sealed and directed, he dispatched a servant with it to the post-office in the village.

The breast of Jedediah Trimbush had for some time past been the depository of the colonel's concerns, and when evening brought them together over their pipe and bottle, the colonel related to him the conversation which had that morning passed between himself and the divine, and concluded his account by saying,—"I am convinced, from what I have observed of Clarentine's conduct towards him, that she will never become his wife; for my own part, I can't say but that I almost wish she had thought

differently of him from what she does; for, as times go, I am of opinion that he would have made her a very fair husband."

"I would have gone into the church and forbade the banns myself!" ejaculated the serjeant.

"What for? what do you mean?" exclaimed the colonel.

"Because," replied Trimbush, "it would have broken my heart to see Miss Clarentine married to such a reprobate."

"Come, come," answered the colonel, "I will hear nothing about his religion."

"It is his want of religion I am going to speak of, your honour," returned the serjeant; "I little thought, when I was listening to the shameful story I this morning heard of him, that he was at that very moment having the hardiness to propose himself for the husband of a young lady of Miss Clarentine's excellent heart and virtuous principles."

 "Why,

"Why, what has he done?" demanded the colonel.

"Deserted the offspring of his blood," answered the serjeant, "and deluded the weak by his guileful arguments, like the tempter of old, to become a false witness before the Lord. May his eyes be opened to his manifold transgressions, and his soul redeemed from sin, or bottomless will be the pit that will open to receive him!"

The colonel commanded him to be explicit; in compliance with which injunction Trimbush delivered the following account.—It appeared that, in the course of the last autumn, Mr. Elphinstone had seduced the daughter of a respectable husbandman residing in his neighbourhood, and that, shortly after his departure from the country to pass the winter in London, the victim of his arts having discovered herself to be in a state which must inevitably betray their

past

past intimacy, wrote to him, soliciting him not to desert her in her present unhappy situation, but, if possible, to devise some means for concealing her shame from the knowledge of the world. Promising her an immediate reward, and likewise in future to prove himself her friend, if she would allow herself to be entirely guided by his advice, he recommended her to swear her child to the son of the farmer to whom her father was servant. His arguments prevailed; and when the alteration in her person drew forth alike the inquiries and upbraidings of her afflicted parents, she boldly named the young farmer as the aggressor; and, in compliance with the instructions of her real seducer, added, that from the first moment of their acquaintance he had promised her marriage. The young man, thus falsely accused, steadily denied the charge exhibiting against him; but the deluded girl, unabashed by his firmness, and pro-

 bably

bably conceiving that her only chance of palliating her shame, and likewise of retaining the friendship of him who had prompted her to her present baseness, rested on the pertinacity with which she adhered to her tale, suffered herself to be taken into the presence of a magistrate, where she hesitated not to pronounce the oath which rendered the innocent young man amenable to the fine of the law, but tended naturally to incense him against the iniquitous being, of whose infamy he could not but be convinced.

In this state matters remained till about six weeks before the present time, when the deluded girl was relieved from her burden; but her hour of trial being past, symptoms of an unpromising nature appeared in her, and in the space of a few days a mortification took place, which threatened the dissolution of her existence. No sooner did the unhappy being gain acquaintance of the perilous

situation

situation in which she stood, than the idea of approaching death, aggravated by the recollection of her crimes, drove her almost to frenzy—she raved incessantly for the presence of the young man against whom her false evidence had been pronounced; and when, in compliance with the entreaty of her relatives, who mistook the cause of her anxiety to behold him, he was prevailed upon to visit her, she made a full confession of her guilt, and in the frantic accents of despair implored him to grant her that pardon, without which she could not close her eyes in peace. The young man's heart was softened by her sufferings—he pronounced the forgiveness for which she prayed; and a few days after, the pitiable mother and her unconscious babe were at rest in the same coffin.

"Poor girl! poor thing!" pronounced the colonel, brushing a tear from his eyelid. "Somehow or other, I think women are in general born to be great

sufferers; I trust and hope they will have their due reward hereafter."

"But what prospect have their seducers and oppressors, your honour?" cried the serjeant.

The colonel took a few long-drawn whiffs of his pipe, then said—"And did the matter end there?"

"Not exactly, your honour," replied Jedediah; "and yet, in fact, I may say it did too. The young man was of course exonerated from the mulct with which he had been charged to the parish; and his father was so exasperated at the rascality of Mr. Elphinstone, that he took advice about bringing him to account for his conduct; but as all positive evidence of his guilt had died with the girl, he found it would be a difficult matter to proceed in, and so relinquished it. Every honest person about the country, your honour, thinks with pity on the poor girl, and looks with horror on her betrayer; and I am sure that if

Mr. Elphinstone, as great a man, as he thinks himself, were to attempt to preach again in the village in which his parsonage stands, and in which this sad affair happened, I don't believe even the clerk would go into the church with him."

"It is a bad story—a very bad one indeed," rejoined the colonel: "to be sure, we all know that, in cases of this kind, men try to conceal their offspring from the knowledge of the world. A natural child, serjeant——"

"In my opinion, your honour," the serjeant interrupted him by ejaculating, "is no object of disgrace compared to an unnatural father."

"There is some truth in that remark indeed," answered the colonel. He paused, then added—"I shall not like the parson the better for this story, he may depend upon it. But he is no more to me than any other man, for I am sure Clarentine will not have him."

"It would gladden my heart to hear

your honour say she *shall* not have him," emphatically pronounced the serjeant.

"Well then, she *shall* not have him!" exclaimed the colonel, after another pause. "You are an honest fellow, Jedediah Trimbush, and I am sure you wish me and mine all well—I am sure you do. I should not like him for a son-in-law myself now—I will be d—d if I should!—Serjeant, she *shall not* have him!"

"Heaven bless you, colonel! you are one of the best of men—Heaven bless you, and send dear Miss Clarentine happy!" returned the serjeant, and silence ensued.

A few days brought the colonel the expected letter from his daughter, which contained a positive downfal to Mr. Elphinstone's hopes—a circumstance that imparted no small satisfaction to the feelings of the serjeant, and which the colonel lost no time in communicating to

to the party whom it most intimately concerned.

At the expiration of another week, a laconic epistle arrived at the Hall from Frederick Trelawney; it stated that the squadron of which his ship formed a part, had been suddenly ordered from Yarmouth Roads to Portsmouth, and as it was surmised that an expedition towards the Mediterranean was in agitation, and it was consequently impossible for him to obtain leave of absence from his ship, if his father wished to see him previously to his leaving port, he must lose no time in proceeding to Portsmouth, where it was probable that he might procure an opportunity of passing a few hours with him.

A trip of this nature to visit his son was the only inducement which could now tempt the colonel to leave home, and it formed a diversity of a few days, with which he was always well pleased; he accordingly resolved without hesitation

tion to accept the lieutenant's invitation, and in his own mind immediately fixed upon Geraldine, whom he had long desired an opportunity of introducing to Frederick, as his companion. But, as the serjeant had predicted, she could not be induced to accede to his request, notwithstanding his powerful arguments—that he desired her to regard him as her father—that he sincerely hoped to be so one of these days—and that, old as he now was, there could be no more harm in taking a jaunt with him than with his sister Thom; but Geraldine was inflexible; the reasoning which her inviter urged might have been accepted by her, had not the purpose of their journey been a visit to one to whom she could not conquer her idea of the indelicacy of being thus introduced. The colonel accordingly, after many dissatisfied shakes of his head, and many half-muttered sentences, such as—"Too nice by half!"—"There is no convincing

a woman."

a woman"—"It is all nonsense, but it can't be helped," was obliged to content himself with his old travelling companion, Jedediah.

The bustle of the seaport town amused and enlivened the old colonel, and though he saw little of his son, he remained there till he had seen the fleet (which was rumoured to be proceeding on an expedition against Algiers) under weigh, and then returned home, where Geraldine again became his chosen companion, till the period appointed for his daughter and Miss Thomasine's excursion into Gloucestershire being drawn to a close, their return once more made up the usual sum of the inhabitants of Thunderbolt Hall.

After the first exchange of salutations at meeting had passed between the colonel and his relatives—"Come, stand up, both of you," he cried, "and let me see how you look after your change of air and water-drinking. By the honour

of

of a soldier, sister Thom, I think you are grown fat upon it—and ruddy too, upon my word! I am afraid you have not confined yourself to the waters neat—eh, sister?—But," turning to his daughter, "I can't say as much in your praise, Clarentine; I think you are both paler and thinner than when I saw you last. Have you been starving yourself to get a fine shape, or have you met with an unkind swain to fret about?"

Clarentine blushed, endeavoured to smile, but did not reply.

"Well, well, never mind," continued the colonel—"I want no confessions till you think proper to make them—I only advise you not to disappoint your appetite any longer, now you are come home, for in the country here amongst the farmers, fat kine are better esteemed than lean; and never pine for one false swain, I conjure you; for I am no soldier if you might not command some dozens of true-hearted ones, whenever you choose

choose to spread your net. And now let us go to dinner, for I shall enjoy the account of all you have seen and met with in your travels best over my pipe and bottle."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE report was now prevalent throughout the kingdom that the expedition in which Frederick had sailed was destined against Algiers, and the colonel was rapturously anticipating the laurels which an opportunity would be afforded his son of gathering—"It will be the first engagement," he cried, "that he ever was in, and I would wager my life he proves an honour to his country. I would give one of my limbs to have a bird's-eye view of the action, and see how he conducts himself; I am sure he will

will behave well; he will not disappoint the hopes of Britannia, when 'she expects every man to do his duty'—no, no, that he will not, depend upon it. I think I see the brave boys firing red-hot shot upon the unfeeling Turks, and burning their inhumanity out of their breasts. Oh, a battle, either by sea or land, is a glorious thing!"

"I think then," remarked Miss Hewardine, smiling, "it must be, as the man in the play says, when the fighting is all over."

"It is a dreadful reflection," said Clarentine, "that so many of the human species, without nourishing any personal enmity, should meet together for the express purpose of sacrificing each other's existence. And how miserable is the secondary consideration of the number who become sufferers, from the loss of their dearest friends and relatives!"

"And where the devil," exclaimed the colonel, "if they had the choice of a spot

a spot for those whom they most esteem to draw their last breath upon, could they desire it to evaporate more to the honour both of the deceased and the survivor, than on the common bed of glory, which the field of battle affords to every brave spirit that takes its flight in the service of its country? I never yet knew a good soldier but what would have considered it a disgrace to die on a feather-bed before he was superannuated."

"Heaven send our poor Frederick may return safe!" said Miss Thomasine.

"Fervently I second your prayer, sister," returned the colonel—"if you mean alive, and preserved to take a share in more encounters of the kind; but if you mean free from wound or scar to certify that he has maintained a post of danger, we differ in that point very materially, I assure you. Let me see a man of war look like one; I don't want to see a soldier or a sailor enter a room with the trip of a dancing-master, or with the faultless

faultless form of a statuary's model—no, no—let me see them bear some sign of the profession about them—a blind eye,—a mutilated arm, or a wooden leg. And if the girls had any sense, they would prefer those who are able and willing to fight for their rights and liberties; to all the waltzing civet-cat puppies who infest fashionable drawing-rooms, and who, if their hearts could be inspected, would, I dare say, require as much protection in the hour of danger as if they wore petticoats themselves."

"It must be a miserable situation to be the wife of a sailor in the time of war," remarked Geraldine, her countenance almost betraying that her observation had proceeded from some unrevealed sensation passing in her heart.

"Wretched! agonizing!" emphatically pronounced Clarentine—"a state of misery which none can conceive——"

"But those who have felt it, I suppose you mean to tell us," the colonel interrupted

interrupted her by saying; "and as there are none of that description present, for Heaven's sake don't let us make ourselves unhappy by the force of imagination. Come, play us one of the new marches on your piano, Clarentine, and give a turn to our thoughts."

Clarentine placed herself at the instrument, but her fingers trembled as she began to sweep the keys; nor was her composure, although its interruption escaped the observation of both the colonel and Geraldine, perfectly restored till Miss Thomasine had placed herself by her side, and an eloquent glance of the eyes had been exchanged between them.

A short progress of time brought on the period at which some decisive intelligence was expected to arrive in England from the fleet in the Mediterranean. The colonel, with an anxiety natural to his temper, regarded every hour as an age which kept him in ignorance of the information

information for which his soul panted, and rising almost with the dawn, he loitered for hours at the park-gate, to be in readiness to receive the postboy by whom his letters and newspapers were brought from London. At length, to his uncontrollable joy, he descried the wished-for intelligence-bearer, with a streamer of blue ribbon flying from his oilskin hat.—" Huzza!" instinctively exclaimed the colonel—" then we have beat them?"

" Oh ay, your honour!" cried the postboy, " we have done 'em again; all the mounseers will soon be quiet now."

" The mounseers!" echoed the colonel.

" Ay, the Turkey mounseers and all," replied the boy; and delivering the newspaper to the colonel, he rode off, shouting—" Pellew for ever!—huzza!"

The agitation of the colonel's mind imparted itself to his fingers, and occasioned him no inconsiderable delay in tearing off the envelope in which the newspaper

newspaper was wrapped; he seated himself on a garden-bench under a tree on the lawn, and upon the first column which met his eye, read, in capital letters—"TOTAL DEFEAT OF ALGIERS!"—"Thank God! Heaven be praised!" he ejaculated, "Britannia is still sole mistress of the waves!" He proceeded eagerly to peruse the account of the destruction of the city which followed this announcement, and as he read, in the fervour of his feelings he sang aloud—"Rule, Britannia! Britannia, rule," &c.

"He that is merry, let him sing psalms, your honour; so saith the book of life," the voice of the serjeant, of whose approach he had been unconscious till he spoke, interrupted him by pronouncing.

"Psalms!" echoed the colonel—"can they express the fire and rapture of an old soldier's heart when he reads of the victories of his country?"

"But if the arms of his country had

not been upheld by the hand of Heaven," answered the serjeant, "they had not prospered; to the Power omnipotent therefore is all praise and thanksgiving due."

"Serjeant Trimbush, don't distract me with your cant, at a moment of interest like this," replied the colonel, warmly; "the infidel Turks are defeated—Algiers is in ruins—tyranny is overthrown—and if you don't rejoice like a man at a glorious victory like this, I shall be apt to think that you have forgot you ever were a soldier. Zounds, Jedediah! it is not so long since you and I were parties concerned in a business of this kind, and my heart warms at the recollection, if yours don't."

The serjeant smiled, and flourished about his right hand, in which he held his old military cane, as if he had been guarding off the blows of an enemy.

"We had hot work enough of it, I am sure, to remember it, at that cursed

siege

siege in the Netherlands," continued the colonel—"up to our knees in their muddy Dutch dams."

"With the enemy's balls flying over our heads in all directions," returned the serjeant.

"Scaling the walls, when we had scarcely a leg left to stand on," rejoined the colonel.

"Descending into the town through a forest of bayonets," added the serjeant.

"Blinded with smoke," proceeded the colonel.

"And choked with thirst," continued the serjeant.

"But we conquered—old England, as usual, got the day, thanks to British valour!" exclaimed the colonel.

"Thanks to Heaven!" pronounced the serjeant.

"Huzza then, I say, for the honour of Britain, or I will knock you down as flat as an empty knapsack," roared out

 the

the colonel—“ huzza, I say—huzza! huzza!”

“ Hallelujah! hallelujah!” chanted the serjeant; and the colonel, satisfied that he was vociferous, without minutely attending to the sounds which he uttered, rose from his seat, saying—“ Now let us go and tell Clarentine and my sister the news;” and proceeded towards the house, shouldering his cane with his musket-arm, and followed by the serjeant, whose joy was of necessity confined to the expression of his countenance, not being able to spare the assistance which he derived from his cane in supporting him on his wooden pins, to imitate the military deportment of his commander.

The colonel had now received every satisfactory information as a British subject, but he had gained no particular intelligence of the nature which, as a father, he desired to obtain; and when his feelings began to cool from the warmth

warmth with which the news of the victory had inspired him, he again became petulantly impatient for tidings of his son. He had given orders for the Gazette to be sent to him as soon as published, but two or three days might still intervene before it arrived, and the interval appeared to him an immeasurable length of time to be passed in suspense. On the third morning, however, whilst the family were at breakfast, the serjeant hobbled into the room with it in his hand.

"Now then—now for it!" vociferated the colonel, dropping his toast from his hand, and snatching up his spectacles, which lay ready wiped by his side; but in his impatience to adjust them to his eyes, they fell from his forehead upon the ground, and the glasses were shivered.

The colonel did not very often swear, but this was an occasion upon which his

passion could not forbear venting itself in the first words that rose to his tongue; when he could command a clear utterance—"Open the paper, Clarentine," he cried—"open the paper, and turn to the list of the killed and wounded. Can't you see it? What are you so long after? Have not you found it?"

"Yes, I have," in scarcely-articulate accents pronounced his daughter.

"Well then," returned the colonel, "look for the second-lieutenants, which, you know, is Frederick's rank, and read their names."

Clarentine complied, and the name of Trelawney was not amongst them.

"Thank God! Heaven be praised!" ejaculated the colonel—"I would wager a crown the dog is promoted. But don't let me be too happy till I am convinced that all is right, and as I could wish it; sometimes, in these hasty accounts, station is inaccurate, but names seldom are.

Read

Read all the rest of the lieutenants—begin with the first, and so on; now, first-lieutenants—go on."

Clarentine proceeded reading—"Killed, J. W——, G. B——; wounded, F. P——; missing, lord Au——" The paper fell from her hand, and she sunk fainting upon the back of her chair.

"What the devil's the matter?" ejaculated the colonel. "Is his name there, after all? Somebody tell me whether it is or not, or I shall go mad."

"No, no—indeed it is not," answered Miss Hewardine, who had been looking at the paper over Clarentine's shoulder whilst she read, and who was now supporting her head against her breast.

"Then what is the reason of her disorder?" cried the colonel—"what is the meaning of this alarm?"

"Dwelling on the disastrous fate of others engaged in the same profession of which her brother is a member," replied Miss Hewardine, "has affected

her sensitive feelings, and she scarcely believes him preserved, although we all feel convinced that he is so."

"Girls are always full of such whims and apprehensions," rejoined the colonel, "that they terrify one out of one's senses. She is not quite gone, I see—one of her eyes is half-open; take her into the garden, sister—a little air will soon revive her, and then she will be sensible of her folly."

In the course of a few seconds, Miss Thomasine succeeded in leading her niece out of the apartment, and the serjeant was then directed by the colonel to fetch his own glasses, and finish the paper to him; and he was shortly convinced, to his entire satisfaction, that the name of his son did not form a part of it; in consequence of which conviction, he was now all impatience either to see him, or to hear from him.

After breakfast, the colonel proceeded to take his accustomary walk over his grounds,

grounds, and saw no more of his female relatives that morning.

About the hour of noon the serjeant received a summons to attend Miss Hewardine in the library. She closed the door on his entrance, and thus addressed him:—"Jedediah, we all know the respect which you bear my brother's family, and are certain that you require only to be informed in what manner you may be of service to any individual belonging to it, to render you active in their cause."

The serjeant bowed a silent affirmative, and Miss Thomasine proceeded thus:—"I am well aware that, affectionately, dotingly as the colonel loves his children, and respectfully as he judges of me, from the influence of habit and circumstance combined, you possess more control over his feelings than any one else; will you not then consent to exert your power in the cause, and for the happiness of my niece

 Clarentine,

Clarentine, whom I am certain you love as your own child?"

"Why were we sent upon earth but to be serviceable to each other, good lady?" replied the serjeant. "I never knew what it was to feel for a child of my own; but if parental affection consists, as I imagine it does, in experiencing more anxiety for the welfare of our offspring than our own, then I do indeed feel like a father for dear Miss Clarentine; and you cannot delight or honour me more than by commanding me to prove myself a father to her."

Some conversation, of which the subject will hereafter be detailed, now passed between Jedediah and Miss Hewardine, at the conclusion of which the former said—"Is it indeed so? May it please Heaven in its mercy to bless her, and send her happy at last! 'It is indeed a dreadful state of uncertainty under which she labours; but admonich her, good lady, to yield herself with resignation

tion to the decrees of that Power which can alone disperse the cloud that now hangs over her. I will myself pray fervently for her endowment with tranquillity of mind. As to his honour the colonel, do not fear his displeasure; she hath committed no sin—she has only obeyed one of the first mandates of Providence; and no fear but his honour will be easily reconciled, and become himself her best consoler."

"I doubt it not eventually," answered Miss Hewardine; "but you know the violence of his temper; and if he should, as I have too much cause to fear he will, for a time prove incensed at what is past, and burst upon her in the first gust of his passion, I am certain her spirits are not in a state to bear his anger—she would sink under his reproaches: he must be prevented from uttering them in her presence."

"Fear not, fear not, good lady," returned the serjeant; "his honour's is

 doubtless

doubtless a warm temper, but he has invariably been an example that such dispositions are coupled with the best and most tender of hearts. Cheer the dear Clarentine, good lady, and assure her that the old serjeant will be true to her colours," added Jedediah; and upon these words they parted.

When the dinner-bell sounded a call for the assemblage of the inhabitants of the Hall, the colonel was met on his way to the dining-room by Miss Thomasine.—"I am sorry, brother," said the latter, "that I am under the necessity of desiring you to dine alone to-day; but Clarentine has been very poorly all the morning, and I cannot think of leaving her."

"Poorly!" echoed the colonel; "what! is she sick—ill?"

"She has a considerable degree of fever upon her," answered Miss Hewardine.

"Then why don't you send for the doctor?"

doctor?" returned the colonel. "Let John saddle a horse, and go and fetch him directly."

"No, no," rejoined Miss Thomasine—"she has just fallen asleep, and I am in hopes that she may awake refreshed and amended. Let us at least await the issue before we seek advice."

The colonel assented, but said that her indisposition had given an entire turn to his feelings, and thrown a complete damp over the pleasure which he had received from the recent victory; and when Miss Hewardine parted from him to return to the chamber of her niece, he admonished her, if the slightest change for the worse took place in his daughter, to give him immediate intimation of it, that not a moment might be lost in summoning the physician.

About the time that the colonel and Trimbush had concluded their first pipe and bottle, Miss Thomasine entered the dining-room.

"Well,

"Well, sister," cried the colonel, "how is Clarentine? Is she awake?"

"She is awake," answered Miss Thomasine, "and I hope not worse than when I saw you before."

She placed herself on a chair opposite to the colonel, and, after a short pause, proceeded thus:—"I am apprehensive, brother, that poor Clarentine's indisposition is more intimately connected with her spirits than her health. Ever since we returned from Cheltenham——"

"I said so," the colonel interrupted her by exclaiming; "the very first moment I saw her after her arrival here in the country, I said she was not the same girl as when she left home—I knew it; I could have sworn something unpleasant would be the result of jaunting abroad for change of air and drinking the waters, as you call it; I never in my life knew any good come of going to those fashionable marts of marriage, reputation, and fortune. Well, what has happened?

happened? what has been the result? what has she done? But I need not ask—I may answer myself the question, without the chance of an error; an affair of the heart is certain to be the reply. The only inquiry that remains is—of what kind? Has she been writing love-letters to a footman—breaking the peace of a married woman—or pretending to return the sighs of a superannuated hunchback, with a coronet to apologise for his deformity?"

The tremor of heart produced in Miss Thomasine by the colonel's rising bile crimsoned and blanched by turns her cheeks, and in a voice which she used every effort to render tranquil, she replied—"No, brother, I thank Heaven, and I am sure you are convinced, that Clarentine has too great a respect both for herself and her relatives, to be guilty of any debasement of feeling, which could either draw a stigma upon her own judgment, or, through her inadvertent

tent conduct, raise the smile of satire against those whom she esteems."

"Ay, ay, ay," cried the colonel, "your good-nature would endeavour, for the advantage of your friends, to palliate an error of which the grossness stared you in the face. But, come, there is a man in the case—that admits of no doubt, from the prologue with which you have opened the business; and this man, whoever or whatever he is, is her adorer, and she his well-pleased idol; so suppose all the rest of your story forestalled, and come at once to his age, rank, and name."

"In age, brother," answered Miss Hewardine, "I suppose him to be about thirty—of a most pleasing address, to which he adds the refined and captivating manners of the scholar and gentleman united."

"Hum!" pronounced the colonel, in a tone of indecision.

"His person," continued Miss Thomasine,

-masine, " is one of the most interesting imaginable; he possesses a sweetness of countenance which gains force from the manly sensibility of his eyes; in short, he is one of the handsomest men I ever saw."

"That for his beauty!" ejaculated the colonel, emitting a puff of collected smoke from his lips; "what signifies his beauty? beauty is the most unimportant of all considerations in estimating the value of a man. What is he? answer me that—it is much more to the purpose."

"A viscount of the English peerage," returned Miss Hewardine.

"Ay!" cried the colonel, becoming more attentive and complacent. "And his name?"

"Lord Augustus Deloraine," was the reply.

"Lord Augustus Deloraine!" echoed the colonel; "why his name is mentioned in the Gazette we received to-day,

or

or I am much mistaken—no, I am right —it was under the head of missing."

"It is too true," answered Miss Thomasine.

"Mercy upon us all!" returned the colonel, softening into approaching tenderness; "then seeing his name in the paper was what made Clarentine faint at breakfast! I see it all, I see it all—poor girl! poor Clarentine! I am very sorry for her—I am indeed—it is a great trial; I pity her very much, and I will go and tell her so directly."

He was rising from his seat, but Miss Thomasine detained him by saying—"Stay, brother—don't go to her just now—solitude will be the most efficacious restorer of her feelings; suffer her to indulge a while in her reflections undisturbed, and let me proceed with what I wish to communicate to you."

"I am at your disposal, sister," replied the colonel—"whatever you say is best to be done, I abide by; I am sure you must

must be convinced that her restoration to peace of mind is my first wish. But, sister Thom, why was I never informed of this attachment, eh? what motive had you for keeping me in the dark in this business? You have heard me say, again and again, that I would never thwart her inclinations, if they were but placed on a respectable object, whatever his rank or situation in life; in her present choice there seems a union of recommendations; then what can have been the whim of keeping the matter a secret from the old man, eh? 'Gad! though I always was of opinion that a title cannot procure esteem for a man who is in other respects deficient, I allow that it adds weight, ay, and considerably too, to one who has virtues and talents to adorn it. A viscount, eh?—well done, Clarentine! And that he should be a sailor into the bargain—pleasant and comical enough that too. There is to be nothing

but

but army and navy in my family—is there, serjeant?"

The serjeant uttered a few words of congratulation in reply to the colonel's question; and the next moment, whilst the colonel was engaged in emptying a glass of wine which had been standing before him on the table, exchanged a look, unseen by him, with Miss Thomasine, intended on his part to convey encouragement, and received on hers with an expression of doubt and dismay.

"Now then, go on with your story," said the colonel, addressing Miss Hewardine.

"It is a very brief one," she replied. "His lordship was introduced to us a few days after our arrival at Cheltenham, and I believe that the partiality which every additional hour's intercourse tended to strengthen and mature, was engendered almost at their first acquaint-

ance with each other. About a month, or rather more, before the period appointed for our return home, Clarentine one morning informed me that she had given his lordship permission to solicit your consent to their union; and that, charged with a letter of introduction to you from her, he intended, in the course of two or three days, to set out for Hampshire, and propose his suit to you in person."

"Certainly, certainly," ejaculated the colonel—"very right, very right."

"On the very evening of the day," continued Miss Thomasine, "on which she had imparted to me this disclosure, lord Augustus received an express from the Admiralty, commanding him to join the fleet then lying off Yarmouth, and granting him only thirty-six hours to prepare for his departure."

"Ah! well," cried the colonel, "these are casualties to which the wives and sweethearts of sailors and soldiers must

be

be subject. He was of course compelled to obey the command he had received; and I suppose from that time she has never seen nor heard of him, till she so unfortunately observed his name to-day in the Gazette. It is the fortune of love and war, as the saying is; and this, I conclude, is the whole account of the matter?"

"The wretchedness of the young people at the idea of being separated at a period so critical to their feelings," resumed Miss Hewardine, her voice and countenance forcibly declaring the sympathy which she took in the grief that she was relating, "exceeded all imagination; a few hours produced a change in Clarentine which was incredible, except to the eye of an observer, and his lordship appeared the pitiable effigy of silent despair. There was but one condition, he said, upon which he could have quitted the object of his affection, with his feelings relieved from the excessive

weight with which they were now oppressed, which was that of having made her his before his departure—that thus, whatever his fate might be, her right to his inheritance, and the title of his wife, might be indisputable. In the agony of a heart which would have moved the unbending spirit of a stoic, he besought Clarentine to consent to their union by special licence on the following morning."

The colonel laid down his pipe, and fixed his eyes upon her countenance with an impatient stare, which at once imposed the dread of proceeding upon her lips.—"Why don't you go on?" he exclaimed, in a tone of gathering rage.

"I am sure, brother, if you had been there," hesitatingly returned Miss Thomasine, "you would have given your sanction to their immediate union—would you not, brother?"

"You don't mean to tell me," vociferated the colonel, "that she has had

the

the hardiness to marry him *without my consent?"*

This was the blow which Miss Thomasine had dreaded, and she attempted in vain to unclose her lips.

The serjeant spoke—" If such is the case, your honour," he said, " Miss Clarentine has only followed the command of the Lord, who hath said—' Be fruitful, and multiply, and re——"

" And who the devil bid you open your flytrap-battery upon the business?" roared out the colonel.

" I could adduce much from scripture to the present purpose, if I were permitted," replied the serjeant; " but I can be as dumb as a spiked cannon, if your honour commands it."

" Then it is so?" rejoined the colonel, again addressing himself to Miss Hewardine—" she is married without my consent—married without my consent!" he emphatically pronounced—" But it does not signify—it is nothing to me—

she

she does not belong to me now—I disavow her, disown her; I will disinherit her—cut her off with a shilling, and advertise against her debts. Married without my consent!" he again repeated.

It was in vain that Miss Hewardine, after a time, assumed courage to represent to him the peculiarity of the situation in which her niece and lord Deloraine had been placed, and to impress, if possible, on his mind the conviction, that, as he had confessed he would not have withheld his consent if he had been present to give it, there could not be so great an error in having anticipated his sanction; but he was, as yet, deaf to every argument; he perceived, he said, that he was no longer considered to be any body, and therefore it became him to let his consequence be felt. Clarentine was an ungrateful minx, whom his indulgence had encouraged to fly in the face of parental authority; and a pretty son-in-law he had to expect in his lord-

ship, who had been guilty of an omission of duty towards him, even before he had become his relative! "A promising couple indeed!" he added—"exactly suited, it appears, to each other; and I wish them happy—I wish them happy—I wish them happy, now they are married without my consent."

He rose as he spoke, and with hasty steps began to traverse the apartment; Miss Thomasine feared that he was proceeding to the chamber of his daughter, and rose also, if possible, to counteract his intention.

"Me go to her chamber!" he ejaculated—"me go to her chamber! What have I to do there? She does not want me—she is perfectly comfortable without me—married and happy without my consent. Me go to her chamber indeed! I shall never see her again—by the god of war, I never will see her again! and I desire you, Miss Hewardine, to go and tell her so."

The

The tears burst into the eyes of the tender-hearted Miss Thomasine, and, from the expression of the serjeant's countenance, which was directed towards her, gathering that it was his advice for her to retire till the first effusions of the colonel's rage had evaporated, she quitted the room.

A considerable silence ensued, during which the colonel continued to perambulate the apartment at an uneven pace, which plainly indicated the agitation of his mind; at length resuming his seat—"Serjeant," he said, "you are the only person in this house to whom I can explain my feelings, with any chance of their being understood in the same manner in which they affect me. I need not tell you I am an old soldier, accustomed to obedience; and my daughter having married without asking my consent, strikes me in the same point of view as if my regiment had stepped forward

 without

without waiting for the word of command."

"Please your honour to consider," replied Jedediah, "that Miss Clarentine is not a soldier, although your honour is, and consequently unacquainted with the strict discipline to which you have been accustomed."

"Unacquainted! yes, so it seems," returned the colonel—"unacquainted with duty, affection, and every other virtue. Upon my word, I cannot but think of it; a wife, a viscountess, and a widow, without my knowing a syllable of the matter till it was all over! Post me for a coward, if I believe there ever was a parallel case in all the world!"

"The hand of death, your honour, like the bursting of a shell, levels all ranks without distinction," said the serjeant; "his lordship's hour, as ordained by Providence, was come, and the tribute of sorrow can now alone be paid to his

his memory. But it is a most consolatory reflection to his survivors, that he was in every respect a man worthy of such a helpmate as the dear lady Clarentine."

"I should not have cared if he had been a powder-monkey," exclaimed the colonel, "if he had only *asked my consent*—only, I say, asked my consent. —Trimbush, hold your tongue—don't speak another word; though my blood boils as if I was sitting at the mouth of a volcano, it is not my wish to work myself up into a frenzy on account of her undutiful conduct; conversation will only inflame me more and more—so leave me to myself and my own reflections; I shall fill my pipe, and sit here alone till I go to bed. Go, leave me."

The serjeant prepared to obey—he did not consider it prudent to attempt any farther remonstrance at the present moment, and leisurely quitting the room, a sigh, followed by the faint exclamation

 of—

of—"Poor Miss Clarentine!" escaped his lips; and as he drew the door after him, he heard the colonel muttering the often-repeated sentence of—"Married without my consent!"

CHAPTER IX.

On quitting the colonel, the serjeant was joined by Miss Hewardine, to whom he had nothing to communicate but his expectation that the colonel's affection for his daughter would soon outweigh the insult which he conceived to have been offered to his parental authority. Miss Thomasine, in return, informed him that she had acquainted her niece that her marriage had been disclosed to her father, and that she had softened to her his observations upon the subject, with a degree of caution and tenderness which

she

she hoped had prevented her from experiencing any considerable addition to the anxiety under which she had already been suffering; and farther explained to Trimbush, that if lord Deloraine had lived to return to England, it had been predetermined between him and Clarentine, that he should present himself to the colonel as a suitor for her hand—a proposition to which there was no doubt that he would have received a ready acquiescence, and the knowledge of their union having already taken place would thus have been withheld entirely from her father; but his lordship's lamentable fate had rendered the disclosure both imperious and becoming.

On the following morning, at breakfast, the colonel received his sister-in-law with only a slight inclination of his head, and maintained a strict silence till the meal was nearly concluded; he then said —"I find that I am myself, upon reflection, as great a ninny-hammer as any

body need to be; for I remember once congratulating myself upon having such a protectress as you for my daughter, who afforded her, in yourself, an example of having combated the strongest temptations, and sacrificed your own inclinations at the shrine of duty."

"And I recollect, brother," replied Miss Thomasine, "that my answer on that occasion was, that having known the severity of disappointment myself, I had a heart open to pity other unfortunates, whom I might observe on the point of devoting themselves to a similar self-immolation."

"Ay, ay, your good-nature—eternally your good-nature," returned the colonel; and, after a short pause, he added—"Do you know what ship lord Deloraine belonged to?"

"Indeed I do not," answered Miss Hewardine.

"Do you know your own name?" ejaculated the colonel; "do you know whether

whether you stand upon your head or your heels? I will be hanged if I don't believe the women altogether have lost their senses! As matters are, however, I consider it proper that I should write to the Admiralty, and inquire into the truth of his fate;" and with these words he proceeded to his study.

His intention produced no inconsiderable relief to the feelings of Miss Thomasine, as it acknowledged that he took some interest in the subject, and she hastened to impart the consolatory intelligence to her niece.

Throughout the day the colonel avoided all particular conversation with Trimbush; and as the latter flattered himself that the temper of his commander was already softening, he forbore to touch upon that subject which he feared might revive the irritation of his feelings. The serjeant, however, received no small comfort from learning, that although the colonel had not that day spoken of his

daughter to Miss Hewardine, he had privately made inquiry of one of the female servants relative to the state of her health.

Towards evening the colonel, all animation, was seen advancing from the lawn with an open letter in his hand, which he informed Trimbush he had just received, by the post from Portsmouth, from his son; and which, immediately on entering the house, he commenced reading aloud, for the benefit of all who chose to become auditors of its contents, which were as follows:—

"DEAR FATHER,

"You will doubtless have heard, long before this reaches you, that British tars, according to the custom of time immemorial, have once more been triumphant. It was a glorious attack—well planned and better executed. Zounds! how we did pepper the walls! I will engage

engage to say, the dey's brains were as well stupified with the roar of the cannon as if they had been lulled with opium; and as to his rascally subjects, our shot made their turbaned heads fly about like a shower of snow-balls. But I will give you all the particulars when I see you, which I hope will not be long. Our ship is the least damaged of any in the action, though we were all the time in the hottest of the fire; and as our captain has business of a particular nature, which requires his presence in England, he obtained leave of our brave admiral to make his way home as expeditiously as he was able. All the fleet are in our rear, and two or three sail already within hail of us; but none of them can sail with us by some knots an hour, especially those which have received much damage in the engagement. Give my love to all, and let me hear from you as soon as possible, directing, as usual, to the post-office in Ports-

 mouth.

mouth. I shall pop down upon a cruize amongst you, the moment I can get leave of absence, depend upon it; so farewell at present. Old England and Pellew for ever!—eh, dad? That is a wish in which I am sure your sentiments will coincide with those of,

"DEAR FATHER,

"Your affectionate son,

"FREDERICK TRELAWNEY."

This satisfactory letter from his son appeared to smooth almost all the difficulties with which the colonel's spirit had before been wrestling—he spoke civilly to Miss Thomasine, sent her brother's letter to Clarentine for her perusal, and ultimately said that he should write by return of post to Frederick, and make particular inquiry of him concerning the fate of lord Deloraine.

About the hour of dusk, the serjeant, who had not, with the assumption of evangelical

evangelical principles, lost his relish for a cup of good ale, entered the little public-house in the middle of the village, and took his accustomed seat near the fireside; his only male companion over his pint and pipe was Walter Sandford, the son of the small farmer who has already been mentioned in our pages, as the individual against whom the false testimony of the unfortunate female, who had been the dupe of the reverend Mr. Elphinstone's arts for a time, so unjustly prevailed; he was a young man of about twenty-five years of age, of a good temper, and of pleasant manners, with a mind tolerably well cultivated for his rank in life, and a heart which appeared the residence of plain and honest principles; he was by no means an alehouse frequenter, but he had been sent to the village on business for his father, who resided at the distance of a few miles, and was refreshing himself with a cup of

of goody Burton's home-brewed ale before his return.

The serjeant's thoughts were full of the recent victory and the safety of lieutenant Trelawney, and he began to entertain Walter Sandford with a more particular account of the late siege, than he had been able to gather from the tongue of public rumour unbacked by private intelligence, and thence proceeded to inform him of the arrival of part of the fleet in the roads at Portsmouth. The name of the seaport had been twice or thrice repeated by them, when a voice on the opposite side of the kitchen interrupted their conversation, by saying—"Pray, gentlemen, do either of you know Portsmouth?"

The eyes of them both were instantly turned to the speaker, whom they perceived to be a female of apparently about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age; her dress was of the plainest kind, con-

sisting

sisting only of a common linen gown, a stuff petticoat, a checked apron, and a coloured cotton handkerchief. Across her shoulders was thrown a faded scarlet cloak, which was partly drawn over a basket that she carried on her arm, and which contained a small assortment of ballads, pincushions, children's rattles, and all those trivial articles which form the stock of an itinerant pedlar. Her countenance was enveloped in a plain straw bonnet, by which it was so considerably shaded that it could be only partially observed, except when she raised her head to address any person, which being at this moment the case, they beheld a set of features which were pleasing without being regular, and more expressive than beautiful; her skin was pale, though not unhealthy, and her voice was peculiarly sweet and gentle. As she spoke, she appeared to have been in the act of placing her basket of wares upon a table near her, and joining the

landlady

landlady and her daughters at their tea-table, but that her intention had been checked by the sudden impulse of addressing to them the question which had drawn their attention towards her.

"No indeed, young woman," replied Walter Sandford—"I don't know the town—I never was five miles nearer to it, I believe, than I am now."

"I have been there," was the answer of Trimbush, "but it is some time ago, and mine was a very short visit. Its inhabitants I am utterly unacquainted with; but perhaps your question was not asked with a view to making inquiry about any of them?"

"Yes, it was," she returned—"but no matter; thank you, gentlemen—I shall hear when I get there;" and turning from them with a polite inclination of her head, she took her seat at the tea-table. She now began to converse with the landlady, and from their discourse it appeared that she was to sleep

at Mrs. Burton's that night, and in the morning to pursue her way to Portsmouth, to which place her steps were bent.

There was something so interesting in the appearance of the stranger, that both the serjeant and Walter Sandford, if an estimate of their feelings could be drawn from their looks and their silence, seemed to prefer the contemplation of the young pedlar to the pursuit of their former conversation. After a time—"It is a long way to Portsmouth—full twenty miles," remarked the serjeant; "you will hardly reach it to-morrow night—the evenings are beginning to close in early now."

"The distance which I travel in a day," she answered, "must depend upon my strength and my custom. A willing heart is a spur to every exertion," she added, with a smile, that did not appear to indicate either pleasure or peace of mind.

Walter

Walter Sandford, who, from the first moment of his beholding her, had required no excitement beyond his own inclination to relieve her necessities, if he believed her to be in need, no sooner heard her pronounce the word "custom," which he could not but conclude had implied that the sale of her merchandize must in some degree regulate her in the progress of her journey, than he rose and said—"Pray let me see your ballads; I should like to buy a few."

She extended her basket towards him, and pretending to select a couple, though he had looked more at the vender than her ware, he put a shilling into her hand, and returned to his seat.

"Stay, my dear—don't put aside your basket," cried the serjeant, rising from the chimney-corner and hobbling towards her; "let me see what you have got that will suit me."

"Ay, come, that is right, Mr. Serjeant," observed the landlady; "she

seems a very nice young woman, and she can't be rich, poor thing! if she has only what she gets by selling those nick-nacks to live upon; make a purchase—you will not feel the loss of a few pence—'He who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord,' you know, Mr. Trimbush."

"Not he who giveth in ostentation, goody," returned Trimbush, "but truly he that does so in obedience to the feelings of his heart."

The serjeant bought a couple of pin-cushions, which he presented to the landlady's daughters, and the stranger returned to her meal.

The idea of having performed a benevolent action puts men, at least those of worthy dispositions, into good-humour with themselves—a remark of which the serjeant and Walter Sandford at this moment felt the truth; and having resumed their seats, they renewed their chat, and called for another jug of ale.

In the course of a few minutes, their

attention

attention was drawn to a loud talking and laughing on the outside of the kitchen-window.—"Do you know that voice?" said Sandford to the serjeant.

The reply was in the negative, and Sandford rejoined—"Then of course you don't know the man, and I am sure it is no loss. Have you never heard of Neddy Stubbins?"

"Stubbins!" repeated the serjeant; "do you mean the old clerk and sexton at the parish-church here?"

"No," answered Sandford—"his name is Bob; this is his son; an aunt of his, who had a little money, brought him up, and put him, as I have heard, to some charity-school for his education. He is lately become a clerk in London, and he is come down on a visit to his father—goes about dressed in what he calls the London fashion, treating every body he meets, and bragging of his consequence. But here they come; would you like to depart?"

"I fear

"I fear not the sons of Mammon," answered the serjeant—"they cannot taint me. Sit still."

Old Stubbins and his son, followed by three or four country gawkies, who were inhaling, with open mouths and wide-stretched eyes, the wonders relating by their old acquaintance of the great and astonishing city, where their ci-devant playmate had, according to his own account, become such a great man, now entered the place, and took their seats at the end of a long table, at the opposite extremity of which were placed the young farmer and the veteran Jedediah. The whole of the party appeared to be partially elated with mirth and ale. Old Stubbins spoke individually to the serjeant and Walter Sandford, and his son gave them an inquisitive stare, which, if his countenance had been capable of expression, might have been translated into—"An old soldier, and a youth in a fustian jacket and leathern gaiters, are

no

no companions for me;" though indeed the dress and appearance of both could not, by any spectator, but have been ranked above the group by which he was surrounded; but then they were his particular friends, reflected into imaginary consequence by shining under his borrowed light.

After some time, during which Ned Stubbins took good care to talk sufficiently loud to give every one in the kitchen (if any one there thought his remarks worth listening to), an opportunity of hearing that he had seen all the sights of the great town, and dabbled in all the petty vices which folly denominates *life*, he rose from his seat; and in order to make a display of a watch, to which a glittering chain and seals were attached, moved to the chimney, over which a dialplate was suspended, to ascertain how far time in the country varied from that at the Horse Guards. After a long dissertation on the excel-

lence

lence of his watch, he was replacing it in his fob, and wheeling back from the fireplace towards his seat, when his eye fell upon the female stranger. Without ceremony he immediately bent down his head to take a more satisfactory view of her person under her hat, and drawing forth his eyeglass to assist his observation—"Bless my soul!" he cried, "how do you do? What brings you here? How devilish odd that you and I should both meet in this out-of-the-way place! But I consider it very lucky—damned fortunate, upon my honour! Well, and how goes it?" he added, throwing himself into a chair by her side, and taking her hand in his.

"I beg, sir, that you will return to the seat which you have just left," replied the young woman, "and desist from disturbing me."

Whilst speaking, she endeavoured in vain to release her fingers from his hand; and when she became silent—"Why, what

what the devil is the meaning of all this *shew-off?*" he cried. "It is a devilish good joke of you to pretend to *act* before me! Come, no sham, but tell me why you have left town?" and as he spoke, he increased the familiarity of his actions and address.

"If you wish to be free from interruption and impertinence, young woman," said the serjeant, "come and sit down by me, and I will take care that you shall be so."

The female broke from her insulter, and flying up to Trimbush, ejaculated—"Thank you, sir—you are very good indeed; I have no protector in the world."

"So I imagined," rejoined Neddy Stubbins—"I guessed you had no protector, the moment I saw you here in this queer plight. But I have been to a masquerade, my dear, as well as you. You were not so shy of me the night you and Kitty Harris paraded Drury-

lane

lane lobby with my friend Joey Shanks and me, and then went and supped with us at ——. Come," he added, endeavouring to throw his arm across her shoulder, "be wise now, and acknowledge at once."

At his approach the female slunk behind the back of the serjeant, who, brandishing his cane, and shaking it in the face of the aggressor, said—"If you stir one inch, this is your portion. I have settled the business of many a better man than you in my day, and have not quite lost my skill."

"Oh, damme, sir, if you are insolent," replied Ned Stubbins, placing himself in a boxing attitude, "I have not been in London seven years not to know a little of the art of self-defence."

The serjeant was deliberately rising to meet his assault; for although supported on wooden legs, not an effective man, much less Ned Stubbins, could have alarmed him; and was doubling

his fists in return, when young Sandford, starting up and stepping between them, said—"What! does your London courage consist in assaulting a disabled man? Shame on your want of manhood! If you wish a little exercise, I am your man."

The countenance of Ned Stubbins fell, for many a *fancy-man* has shewn himself wise enough to be cautious of attacking a well-built English farmer. His companions, especially his father, perceived the turn which had taken place in his feelings, and the latter called to him not to run himself into danger, whilst the former came forward to assist his cause.

"Be quiet, gentlemen, if you please," cried Walter Sandford—"I consider you to have no business with this affair; and if you attempt to interfere after this hint, I shall shew you my disapprobation of your conduct pretty plainly."

"Yes, pray desist, pray desist," exclaimed

claimed Ned Stubbins, much to the surprise of all parties; for Ned thought, that if there was any boxing, he must box himself, or incur ridicule for suffering others to do it for him; and not being, as we have already said, at all inclined to hazard the issue of an onset with Walter, he resorted to finesse for his safeguard, and taking a card from his waistcoat-pocket, addressed Sandford with—"There is my card, sir; I am a gentleman; if I have insulted you, I am to be found when, where, and how you please;" and placing the card in his hand, he pulled up his collars, and strutted across the kitchen.

The serjeant was still standing with his cane raised over his head in an attitude of defence, and the friends of Ned Stubbins were applauding and admiring his London and gentlemanly conduct; whilst Sandford, who had received the card of his antagonist with a sneer of contempt, on perusing it, gradually re-

laxed into a smile of jocularity, and said —"Pray, sir, is it your intention, when we meet, to fight with knee-buckles?"

"Knee-buckles, sir!" exclaimed the blustering Ned Stubbins—"what do you mean by knee-buckles, sir?"

"I see nothing but a pair of knee-buckles mentioned on your card, sir," was the reply.

Jedediah bent forward to read it, and glancing his eye over the surface, said— "Why this is a pawnbroker's duplicate for a pair of stone knee-buckles, pledged for three shillings and sixpence!"

The rage of the self-dubbed man of fashion at the error of which he had been guilty in drawing a wrong card from his pocket (for he certainly was provided with some gilt-edged ones, impressed with a name, although whether his own or not we are not acquainted), and thus exposing the fund from which he occasionally drew his resources for moving in *life*, may be conceived, but

cannot be done justice to in recital; he raved, stamped, and swore—abused every body, especially the poor terrified pedlar—and declaring it was a disgrace for a gentleman to remain in the present company, called to his dad and his friends to follow him, and quitted the house.

"He is gone, without paying me a farthing, I declare!" cried Mrs. Burton. "I have heard it is the fashion to run away and not pay your debts, and I suppose it makes a part of his London *life*, as he calls it. He is a rogue, I can see that; and his father is a foolish old man, to give him countenance in his ways; he deserves to pay for his folly, and he shall too, if the son does not come back to reckon with me. I know that any one that drinks in a party is as liable to be called upon for payment as another—that is my country *life*, tell him; and if young Ned don't satisfy me, old Bob shall—that is my *fancy*," she added, laughing.

 The

The serjeant and the young farmer were too much diverted with the recollection of the scene just past to desire farther revenge on the pitiable and contemptible object by whom it had been produced, and addressing the poor pedlar, who still stood trembling behind Jedediah, Sandford said—"Come forward, young woman—pray come forward, and dismiss your fears of that unworthy object; take a draught of this ale," he added, presenting her the cup as he spoke—"it will assist in reviving your spirits."

"Ay do, child—do," pronounced the landlady—"there is nothing in it but good malt and hops; it could not hurt the first lady in the land, and o' my conscience I believe, would do any body less harm than their fine wines and cordials."

The female raised the cup to her lips, and as she was returning it into the hand of Walter, Trimbush said—"I suppose

you

you never saw that impertinent puppy before—did you, my dear?"

The female appeared confused by the question—she blushed, and, after a few moments' pause, answered—"I will not utter a falsehood: yes, sir, I have had the misfortune to see him before, and to have been slightly acquainted with him; but depend upon it that I will never deign to acknowledge him again—he is one of those unprincipled——"

At this instant old Stubbins re-entered the house.—"I will thank you, Mr. Serjeant," he said, "to give me that bit of paper my son left in your hand: he did not come here to be robbed of his duplicate."

"No," ejaculated the landlady; "nor I did not want him to come here to rob me of my ale. If you talk of robbing, it is me, I think, that has most need to call out."

"Here, here—pray take Mr. Neddy

his

his bill of exchange," cried the serjeant, laughing.

"I think you carry your head very high, Mr. Serjeant," replied the old man; "but I shall hold my tongue, because, if I were to say any thing, it would be called spite, on account of your being a 'vangelical. But I wonder what your parson, Rebecca Searle, or her friend, Geraldine Lascelles, would think, if they heard of such an old religious man as you kicking up a dust about a strange young woman;" and away he went, self-persuaded that he had said something cutting to avenge his son Neddy's wrongs.

The moment he was gone—"Geraldine Lascelles, did he say?" exclaimed the stranger; "can it be possible that he meant that Geraldine—she who was a foundling, brought up as his own child, by a worthy man named Benjamin Ebsworth?"

"Yes,

"Yes, indeed it is the same of whom he spoke," answered Jedediah; "what do you know of her?"

"Every thing that is good, kind, and amiable," replied the young woman.—"Oh that I could see her, and tell her——" She hesitated.

"You *may* see her, and have an opportunity of telling her any thing you please," rejoined the serjeant; "she lives only at a very short distance from hence."

"With her protector—her father, as she always called Benjamin Ebsworth?" eagerly demanded the stranger.

The serjeant explained the death of the worthy preacher, and the guardianship under which Geraldine now lived.

"I am sorry, very sorry he is dead," she said; "I would have given worlds to have thrown myself at his feet."

"Where did you know Geraldine?" asked Trimbush.

"From what you have already told me,

me, you are doubtless acquainted with her?" rejoined the female.

"Indeed I am—intimately acquainted with her," answered the serjeant.

"Then you cannot fail to have heard her mention me," was the reply.

"Tell me your name," said the serjeant.

"Did she never speak to you of Nancy Wilmot?" was the subsequent inquiry.

"That she has, many a time," replied the serjeant—"many and many a time spoke to me, with sisterly affection and heartfelt gratitude, of poor Nancy Wilmot."

"I am that poor Nancy Wilmot," rejoined the female, and burst into tears.

END OF VOL. I.

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